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*The February number of THE SMART SET will contain:
"The Wanderers," by Gertrude Lynch*

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*Among the other contributors to the February number will be: Julian Hawthorne, J. J. Bell, Richard Le Gallienne,
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A SISTER TO HUSBANDS

By Caroline Duer

PART I

THE Mt. Desert boat lay at the mainland wharf, where the train from New York had just deposited an enormous pile of freight and baggage, and a small group of heated and more or less disheveled travelers. The last passenger to alight, however, a slim little blonde lady in an artfully simple costume of blue linen, seemed to have suffered the ardent discomforts of the sleeping-car with as little detriment to person and apparel as did Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego those of the burning, fiery furnace.

She walked rapidly across the platform to the slanting gang-plank, down which the trunk-and-barrel-laden trucks were already proceeding at a run, and was soon established on the upper deck with a book in her lap and her bag neatly disposed beside her. Here she presently found herself joined by a mysterious shadow, and a voice from some distance above her head said, courteously, "I think you dropped this letter."

The little blonde lady glanced, first up at the speaker, then down at the book in her lap, where she had evidently carried her correspondence, and lastly at the envelope which he was holding toward her. It was directed to "Miss Diana Lee, Pine Tree Cottage, Tuxedo, New York," in large, bold characters, and Miss Diana Lee, blushing very slightly, acknowledged it as her property, slipped it behind the white embroidery of her blouse, and returned appropriate thanks to the finder. She perceived the gentleman

to be one whom, by sight and reputation, she had known for some years. As it happened, they had never been introduced to each other, but, considering the usual conventionalities rather out of place on this occasion, she addressed him by name and, as the boat started, the following remarks were exchanged between them:

"We have been traveling companions, I suppose, Mr. Haldaine?"

"Cooked in the same infernal oven—yes!"

"I hope that's not prophetic of our ultimate end. I've a fancy that I should not like to be cooked in the same infernal oven that you are, do you know."

"Is the objection personal and particular, or do you consider yourself entitled to a more moderate temperature?" he inquired, smiling.

"Oh, that, of course; for, if the newspapers are to be believed, nobody deserves so hot a fire as you do. But I have other reasons."

Haldaine—the death of whose father some years before had placed him, still a young man, at the head of large mining interests—had been exciting a good deal of adverse criticism in the yellow journals, for his summary handling of a strike lately started among his employees. He permitted himself to look bored on being reminded of his unpopularity, and, resting his hands on the back of the chair which Miss Lee had evidently expected him to occupy, half shut his astonishingly light eyes, and said, "Really?" in a tone that suggested the utmost unconcern in regard to her answer.

Perceiving this, the lady made none. She looked at him with the expression of a wounded dove, and then put up her parasol in a way that completely sheltered her both from the sun and Mr. Haldaine's further companionship.

"It's very warm, even here," she murmured, as if to herself.

"You don't attribute *that* to my lurid vicinity, I hope!" he remarked, making an effort to appear amiable; and then, as she continued silent, "you see," he went on, giving an upward twist to the ends of his small, black mustache, and smoothing his short, pointed beard with an embarrassed hand, "I'm afraid the newspapers are a sore subject with me these days."

"Really?" returned Miss Lee, in careful imitation of his tone.

"Yes; no one enjoys being publicly vilified and abused."

"I suppose not."

"Or privately taken to task by every sentimental, soft-hearted woman of one's acquaintance for defending one's rights."

"You could hardly have thought *I* meant to take you to task, then, for, *properly* speaking, my dear Mr. Haldaine, I have *not* the pleasure of your acquaintance," replied the lady, smoothly.

They were both considerably ruffled by this time; she, because her little attempt at persiflage had been snubbed—and she was not used to snubbing—and he, because he felt he had been unnecessarily irritated and irritating. He was accustomed to assume, easily, pleasant and even interesting relations with women at short notice; always, when he took the trouble, and sometimes, when he did not. It was early in the morning to begin taking trouble. He had meant only to return her her letter—of which he had a vague idea he recognized the handwriting—and pass on; however, he sat down beside her, and directed a reconnoitering glance under the parasol. Her lifted dark eyes beneath her pale-yellow hair had an appealing expression

which was rather attractive in a gentle, delicate, dying-saint sort of way.

"I hope, at least, you do not 'desire that we should be better strangers,'" he observed, quoting Orlando.

"Well, our introduction was somewhat irregular," she answered, demurely, "and our conversation has, so far, exhibited what the Christian Scientists would call 'a decided lack of harmony.' We had better go back, I think, and begin all over again."

"How did it happen that I never met you before?" he demanded, with a very creditable appearance of impulsiveness.

"I suppose your experience among sentimental, soft-hearted women prevented any desire on your part to add another to the already large circle of your friends," suggested Miss Lee, gravely considering him.

He looked up suddenly. "Don't be spiteful," he begged. "After all, it's entirely my loss, you know. I must confess, I do not often ask to be introduced to an unmarried woman. You see, I was brought up abroad, and there one does not see very much of—of—"

"Of young girls and spinster misses," she put in, laughing as he hesitated; "and of course one does not know how to talk to them—safely. Matrimony does not seem to make *men* more interesting at least, I know I am always being summoned by my friends to interrupt their tête-à-têtes with their husbands—but with women it is different. I see I should have been 'wedded earlier' in order to enjoy your confidence, Mr. Haldaine. The limitations of a French education are to be deplored. If it hadn't been for that, we might have made ourselves quite agreeable to each other."

"You find it impossible, under the circumstances, Miss Lee?"

"I'm afraid it would be indiscreet at present, Mr. Haldaine."

"May I ask where you are staying at Bar Harbor?"

"With Mrs. Frederic Vinton. Fred Vinton is a distant cousin of mine."

"I may see you there, then, when I

drive over from North East, where I'm staying with my sister?"

"Certainly. Thank you so much for finding my letter."

"Thank you so much for dropping it. The sender would be surprised to know that it had brought about our meeting."

"If the sender were not proof against surprises where I am concerned, that would certainly be one."

"You make me very curious," declared Haldaine, rising.

"Not about the correspondence of a single woman, surely," said Miss Lee, fluttering the leaves of her book, impatiently.

Somehow, Haldaine felt that she would cast a glance of sarcasm at his back the moment he turned it, so he lingered, as a child lingers on the threshold of the dark room it is reluctant to cross.

"I see you are reading 'The Tick of the Times,'" he said. "Is it any good?"

"No," she returned, "it isn't. It's full of cheap effects, and far-fetched witticisms, and home-made wisdom of a very poor quality. The plot jumps at your eyes from the first page, and the characters become less and less lifelike till the last. If you are wondering why I am so voluble, it is because I spent part of a sleepless night thinking over the terms in which I should review it if I were a reviewer. If you would like to spend part of a sleepy morning agreeing with me, take it"—she held out the book as she spoke—"and skim through a chapter or two."

To her amazement, it had hardly left her hand when it was hurled over the side of the boat, and, as it struck the water, Haldaine, raising his hat, with an expression of mingled mortification and malice, said: "It's hardly necessary for me to read it, Miss Lee; I had the misfortune to write it."

With this, he departed, leaving the lady pink and perfectly speechless.

She turned, and drew her chair nearer the railing, leaning forward and peering into the water as if the crim-

son and gold of the book were still sinking visibly through the blue depths. She was acutely sensible of a discomfort almost physical. The awkward sincerity of her criticism was something not soon to be forgotten. She could only hope she would never see him again. If it depended upon *him*, she was very sure she never would.

Gradually, her flushed cheeks cooled in the fresh breeze, she sat more upright, and put down the parasol which had been screening her from the eyes of her fellow-passengers. She drew in great breaths of the air—air from which the salt seemed all to have evaporated, leaving it still as invigorating as a tonic, and clear as crystal—and began to recover her mental and social balance. After all, it was his own fault for not having written his own novel under his own name.

A jelly-fish drifted by, looking so like the pictures of its kind that one felt it could not be real. Mt. Desert Island grew into a picture ahead, the cleft between the great hills near the harbor becoming more and more apparent. One could see the village clearly.

At this moment, a middle-aged lady, who had been observing Diana with interest ever since she came on board, sidled across the deck, and took the vacant chair beside her. This was Mrs. Sentinel, whose pink cheeks, inquisitive eyes, upturned nose and pursed mouth proclaimed her what she was—a healthy, happy, interested collector and conveyor of all news concerning all people with whom chance brought her in contact.

"How do you do, Miss Lee?" she began. "That was Morton Haldaine who just left you, wasn't it? I thought so, but I couldn't be sure. He looks like a foreigner—cultivates it, prides himself upon it, they tell me. He is a handsome man. Very much spoiled, I hear, by the young married women. Attentive to young Mrs. Dangerfield, they say. As she's a friend of yours, perhaps you can tell me. No? Well, it appears that he gave her a superb emerald-and-dia-

mond collar. Magnificent, they say. He bought it at some Exposition for her, and her neck wasn't slender enough to fit it, and she almost *killed* herself banting. You don't believe it? Well, perhaps he had some stones added. Oh, you mean, you don't believe the story? Well, my dear, I don't know. Young married women do such strange things nowadays, with the full consent of their husbands. I don't know what Mr. Sentinel would have said to me if I'd worn necklaces given me by other men. Who are you going to stop with? Oh, Mrs. Vinton, of course. You are very fond of each other, I've always heard. Now, tell me, does *she* get on with her husband? Some people say yes, and some no. You don't see why she shouldn't? But, my dear, nobody sees why young women don't get on with their husbands nowadays. Still, they don't. I did hear that Florence Dangerfield had sent hers out West to get a divorce, because she said he had a face like a sheep and she was tired of looking at it. It was the same face he'd always had, so far as I could see, except that he certainly used to wear a most patient expression when he was with her. He'll be quite cheered up now, I suppose—if it's true. No, I didn't come up last night. I've been here for a month. I just went over in the boat for the sail, and to see who arrived."

"It is a beautiful sail," observed Diana, with caution.

"Yes," said Mrs. Sentinel, "and then, it's always interesting to see who gets off the train, and how they look. I believe I'm the only person in Bar Harbor who takes the trouble, though," she added, with an air of conscious virtue, drawing her little dove-colored mantle primly around her shoulders. "Mr. Sentinel is lazy, but he likes to hear all about it when I get home."

"I don't doubt it," said Diana, heartily; "I've always thought men enjoyed gossip quite as much as women—I mean, as *we* do."

At this, Mrs. Sentinel pursed her mouth into reproving wrinkles.

"Oh, gossip!" she said. "No intelligent person need indulge in that. One has only to keep one's eyes open, and everything comes before them sooner or later."

They were now rounding the edge of the little pine-clad promontory, which is island or peninsula, according to the rising and falling of the tide, and lies just in front of the landing-place.

"There," she continued, "that reminds me that I saw a short, thick-set man in white flannel making love to a thin girl in a curious, orange-colored dress, under those very trees, not a week ago. Now, some day I shall see that woman in that dress, and I shall know who she is; in the meantime——"

"In the meantime, we are almost in, I think," said Miss Lee, with relief. "I see the people beginning to collect their belongings. Shall we go?"

The terror with which Mrs. Sentinel's gimlet eye inspired her, caused Diana to adopt a gracious complacency of bearing quite at variance with her inward feelings, as they passed Haldaine on their way off the boat. His bow was dignified, and his eye abstracted. She hurried on, and was glad to find herself gradually separated in the crush from both him and Mrs. Sentinel.

A small pony-cart under a rocking, dun-colored sun-umbrella was drawn up near the dock entrance, and, in a flutter of pink frills, two slim feet slipped out of it and ran toward Diana.

"Oh, I was afraid I'd be late. Fred *would* be driven home first—where he had much better have walked, for he's getting too fat, as I constantly tell him. Dear Diana, you don't know how glad I am to see you! I've so much to tell you—not that anything has happened, nothing ever does, you know—but just foolish things that I think. Will you be bored? But you wouldn't say so if you thought so. I must say I've been depending upon you to amuse Fred, and that's not gay. Get in. Did you have a horrid journey? I love to travel—*anywhere*. I hate being settled and doing the same thing day

after day. But it must have been suffocating in the sleeping-car last night, and yet you look so neat and fresh. How do you manage it? And so good! Do you suppose"—with a backward nod at the groom behind—"that he can hear every word I say? No, I don't believe so. Well, *I'm* just as naughty as possible—inside."

"It's a good thing he's not a mind-reader, then," said Diana, laughing.

"Who? Snaffles? Oh, I thought you might mean Fred. It's good *he's* not a mind-reader—though, I don't know. If he were, he wouldn't do the things I most dislike quite so often, perhaps."

"How about the things *he* most dislikes?"

"Oh, I do plenty of them, of course. But, then, I *know* I'm doing them. You see the difference."

Miss Lee nodded her perfect comprehension.

"You're such a saint," went on Mrs. Vinton, in a tone of pretended indignation; "I suppose you can't imagine anything so awful as wanting to flout your husband when he is particularly exasperating."

"I can imagine a worse state than that—not having a husband to flout, when *you* want to be particularly exasperating."

Mrs. Vinton made a little grimace. "He's so dull, at times," she said.

"You are speaking of my cousin, Caroline."

"Well, you must know he is, dear Diana, and what *is* the use of being friends with one's husband's relations if one can't abuse him to them?"

Miss Lee seemed to take a sudden resolution.

"He wasn't dull when I was engaged to him," she observed, with an air of soft reflectiveness, and a dove-like look into vacancy.

In her surprise, Mrs. Vinton gave a sudden jerk to the reins, and the horse, which appeared to be a spirited animal, reared and snorted.

"I never knew you were engaged to Fred!" she exclaimed. "How very

funny! Why didn't you marry him? I rather wish you had."

"I hope *he* doesn't wish it," returned his cousin, laughing.

"Oh, I dare say he does. Why shouldn't he? You are ever so much better and sweeter and cleverer than I—though really, I am nicer to him than you'd think, to hear me talk; really, I am. I see his side of the case. I know I am trying at times. I get so restless. I've nothing to do, you see, and no more has he. I think a man ought to have a career, and not just sit still enjoying the fortune his father put into his pocket. We're too rich, you know."

"He wasn't when he—when I—when we were most intimate," said Diana.

"How old were you? Why didn't it come to anything? Do tell me all about it. I'm sure I should have liked him better then. Was he really poor and alert and ambitious?"

"He was. His father never let him suspect that he was to inherit a fortune."

"I'm afraid if my mother had not *more* than suspected it, I never should have been Mrs. Vinton. I was—well, you know, I was rather pleased with—other people, Diana. And, apparently, Fred was, too. It makes him much more interesting to have had an unhappy love-affair, I declare. Was he desperate about you?"

"Every man that's worth anything thinks he's desperate about the first woman he wants to marry."

"And what about the second?" inquired Mr. Vinton's wife, with a certain pique. "I suppose any feeling short of dislike is good enough for her."

"Oh, he doesn't *think* anything then," said Miss Lee. "If he's desperate, he *knows* it."

"He certainly *said* he was, often enough, and—there he is at the door this minute! He actually hurried from his arm-chair to meet you." She brought her horse to a skilful standstill at the foot of the steps. "Here's Diana. I brought her round

the longest way, because I wanted to talk, quite forgetting that she must be famished. I'm a beast, and she's an angel. Take her in and entertain her till luncheon is ready."

Frederic Vinton had been stolid as a school-boy, rather unimpressible as a youth, and was now, as a man, to say the least of it, unimaginative. He had grown to accept the comfortable, matter-of-fact ease of his life, the importance with which his wealth surrounded his slightest actions, the respect with which his least opinions were received; and no vague longings for situations to dominate—for the control of great affairs at crucial moments—disturbed the serenity of his approaching middle age. His wife's eager desire to do, and see, and know, and experience, in her own proper person, all the interesting things that had ever been done, and seen, and known, and experienced by interesting people anywhere, was incomprehensible to his acquired indolence. Her little waves of restlessness broke again and again ineffectually against the rock of his habitual content. She was very charming, and he loved her devotedly; she was exceedingly pretty, and he admired her immensely; she was, of course, often unreasonable, but even unattractive women could, he was given to understand, be said to suffer justly under this accusation, and that Caroline should be incomprehensible, at times, seemed no more than her due. No man, in whom was the spirit of truth, could lay his hand on his heart and say he understood his wife, but a gentleman could at least stand aside, and permit a lady to indulge her harmless caprices without interference. The time to be firm was when she expected a man of some weight—Mr. Vinton alluded to his social standing—to be capricious with her.

As a matter of fact, between her impatience of conventionality and routine, and his complacency in regard to his worldly standing and domestic wisdom, they bade fair to drift further

and further apart, daily. This Diana could not fail to observe, and, drawing her own conclusions, she determined upon a plan of action. If she were there to "amuse" Fred Vinton, she would do it to some purpose!

"Upon my word, if he won't do anything worth while with his time and his money, I sometimes wish he'd do something downright wicked," declared his wife. "It would be such a relief. But I don't believe he has a reckless thought in his head. And he's so tolerant of perfectly unnecessary boredom. He is more than willing to go through all the conventional dull kinds of entertainment. He'll sit with the most monumental patience and amiability through a long dinner in a hot room with a lot of stupid people, these lovely Summer nights, because that is a well-recognized form of amusement. Amusement! Heavens! I often want to get up and run away, screaming! But if I proposed to him to get a small boat and paddle about on the beautiful water, or to order the horses and take a drive by moonlight, he'd stretch himself till his arm-chair creaked, and yawn, and say: 'Don't you think we do very well where we are, my dear?' That's just the trouble. He *does* do very well where he is, and as he is. But I don't. I want—I don't know exactly what, but something very different."

"You see, Diana," Mr. Vinton, in his turn, would say to his cousin, "the Princess"—a name his wife writhed under, but had never been able to break him of using in a spirit of laborious mischief—"the Princess is a bit difficult to manage if she suspects you of managing her. I let her have her head, and she doesn't feel my hand on the reins." His handsome, rather heavy face was lighted for a moment by a smile of satisfaction, but clouded again, as he added: "I'm sometimes afraid she isn't entirely happy, though; that I am too serious for her. What do you think? And then Branscomb—he's a short, red-haired fellow the women are crazy about up here, an Englishman, writes things; I can't

bear him, but they say he's confoundedly clever—Branscomb talks a lot of socialistic rot to her about the 'work of the world,' and the 'nobility of toil,' till she believes she'd like me to give away all I've got so that she could belong to the 'laboring classes' and have an occupation."

"She wants a legitimate outlet for her activity," suggested Diana.

"She's *all* activity and restlessness; the responsibilities of life are nothing to her," he said, wearily. "She hasn't a thought beyond the interests of the day. She believes she likes simplicity! Well, I'm glad I have the means to supply the kind of simplicity she likes!"

"If we were as poor as church mice, he'd have to wake up and earn a living, and I'd help him, and life would be interesting," said Caroline. "If he went into diplomacy I could even endure 'entertaining.'"

"And you think that represents the attitude of church mice?" observed Diana. "You little goose!"

The Vintons had taken one of the places whose green lawns slope down to a walk once as famous as the Cliff Walk at Newport, but now, like it, fallen—on the part of the fastidious and fashionable community, at least—into disuse. Diana, however, had a habit of slipping out after she was dressed for dinner, and, with a cloak of Madonna-blue silk huddled around her bare shoulders, and her pale, smooth hair brilliant in the sunset light, would flit swiftly from one end of this path to the other, grateful for a few minutes of silence and solitude between an afternoon and evening of active good-fellowship. The opal-colored water heaved and sank on one side, and under the immediate shade of the trees on the other, a panorama of secluded houses, dim, quiet verandas, emerald lawns and luxuriant shrubberies unrolled itself; so perfect in scenic effect that one almost expected the *dramatis personæ* in proper order to make their appearance at any minute, and lay bare their most heartfelt emotions before one's eyes.

Thinking of this, Miss Lee, returning home one evening, found herself, before she was aware, close upon two romantic-looking figures, who were seated on a point of rock a little below the path. They were talking earnestly, with that ostrich-like indifference to anything outside the circle of their own brains which distinguishes the mutually interested, and her attention would not have been particularly excited but for the fact that the man appeared to be short and broad-shouldered, and the woman was dressed in an elaborate French muslin of a remarkable orange hue, which would have put the sun to shame if he had not already hidden himself behind the hills. Remembering Mrs. Sentinel's conversation, and her curiosity about this same gown, Diana laughed to herself as she approached.

"My love in her attire doth show her wit, it doth so well become her." I should like to tell that young woman that, no matter how well it becomes her, she does not show much *wit* in hers," she thought.

And, just as she passed them, the man's voice, deep, dominant, penetrating, exclaimed: "Ah, my dear little lady, the mistake Fate made was to marry you to a rich man, and let you miss all the real, wholesome struggles of life."

And the voice of Mrs. Vinton replied: "I say that to myself a hundred times a day. You've no idea how tired I am of it all! But it's helped me a great deal—just to talk to somebody who understands;" then, half-shyly, half-impulsively, she added: "If the Grahams' dinner is over early to-night, why don't you stop and leave me that book you spoke of, on the Communion of Property? We—that is, I—stay out on the veranda till quite late. It would be nice to see you. I shall be sure to think of something more I want to ask you. I always do."

As they sat facing the sea, the backs of the speakers were necessarily turned toward the path, and Diana, stepping on the grass in defiance of all signs, hurried on, unnoticed.

She had parted from Caroline at an early hour, lunched on a yacht, and been for a sail in the afternoon, and, when she returned, finding her hostess absent, had ordered tea in her own room and idled away an hour or so with a book till it was time to dress for dinner. This meal she now saw was likely to be indefinitely delayed if the lady of the orange robe did not speedily come in and change it. She wondered how long Caroline had been sitting there. But that was one of the least of the things she wondered as she crossed the veranda and encountered Fred Vinton about to stroll out through the window.

"Dressed so early!" he said. "The Princess probably won't be down for hours."

It occurred to Miss Lee that, unless the ocean rose suddenly, the Princess might not even be up for hours; but all she said was: "Well, since you are also dressed early, we may as well amuse each other. Come in and show me again what I ought to have done with that hand at bridge last night. I'm so stupid—I shall never learn."

Dinner was quite three-quarters of an hour later than usual, but everybody appeared to be in brilliant spirits.

"You don't mind if your husband takes me for a drive this evening?" said Diana, putting a caressing hand on Caroline's arm as they left the dining-room. "I'm so anxious to see the Cornici Road by moonlight. We won't start till ten."

Mrs. Vinton's jewel-like eyes opened to their fullest extent; her long lashes fairly quivered. "Fred going to drive you along the Cornici Road to-night!" she cried. "You've bewitched him. May I ask when this plan was concocted?" she went on, in mock indignation.

"Just before dinner, while we were waiting for you to complete your somewhat prolonged toilette. It came about very naturally."

"Oh, did it?" exclaimed the other. "I should have thought it most *extraordinary* if he'd offered to take me on

any such expedition. That's the worst of being a gentleman's wife. He never wants to take you on expeditions, but let a gentle, shy-mannered, angel-eyed cousin appear, and she twists him round her little finger."

"I'll resign in your favor, if you really want to go."

"Not for the world. You resigned in my favor once before, and I'm not sure that it wasn't a great mistake."

"I won't repeat it, then," said Diana. "Shall you be lonely?"

"Not at all. I may have a visitor—at least—that is—some one might stop in for a moment, with a book. Don't hurry home for me."

"I won't, I promise you."

"It's really rather convenient, in a way, you know," continued Mrs. Vinton, in whom there was no guile, "for the person who's coming—of course, he *may* not, but I think he will—is a man whom Fred does not like at all. He is so narrow! You know he's narrow, Diana, as narrow as that"—measuring the smallest possible space on the tip of her finger—"and I don't pay any attention to his prejudices. Now, don't tell me a man is the best judge of other men, because I know better. A man who has had ups and downs, and knocked a few of his corners off against the world may be, but not a respectable, conventional, *moneyed* man like Fred, who associates with all the other respectable, conventional, *moneyed* men, and looks askance at everybody else. My friend is a socialist, an essayist and an exceedingly clever and agreeable man. His name is Branscomb."

"I've heard of him," said Diana. "He's supposed to be very attractive to women."

"I wish you wouldn't say that," cried Mrs. Vinton, "as if he were that horrid sort of person. I don't believe he knows many women."

"I don't know *him*," replied Diana, "so I've no right to an opinion."

"You shall, though, as soon as possible. I want particularly to introduce him to you."

"If he's still here when I return from

my drive," suggested Miss Lee, demurely.

The entrance of Mr. Vinton, who had been delivering orders to be telephoned to the stable, put an end to the conversation, and further talk was of a desultory nature, owing to a game of ping-pong, which Diana—who was extremely lazy—had reluctantly engaged upon with her hostess. Fred, always careful and methodical, was still picking up balls with the remarkable machine invented for that purpose, when the horses came to the door.

"Be sure you are warmly wrapped up," called Caroline, from the top step. "It will certainly be cool driving."

"We can always turn back if I'm cold, can't we, Fred?" said his cousin, with an ingenuous glance.

"Anything you like, my dear," he replied, tucking the lap-rug round her. "I am at your orders."

"Diana, I insist upon your having another cape," cried Mrs. Vinton. "It's most unlucky to turn back from any expedition."

The cousins laughed, and the carriage drove away.

Caroline wandered out on the veranda, and settled herself in a comfortable corner, where she could see the shining water between the trees, and watch the line of the path at the foot of the lawn. The Grahams' house was next but one to hers, and she knew that Branscomb would come that way. By-and-bye he appeared, his broad shoulders and curly head outlined sharply against the light sky as he came up the steps. His overcoat hung on his arm, a soft hat crushed into one pocket, and her book bulging from the other. The moment he took her hand Caroline realized that Diana's little speech had disturbed the pleasure she expected to feel in seeing him. They had understood each other so well from the first; he talked intelligently, he listened kindly, he seemed such an interested and interesting companion, and yet—A man who had the "reputation of being attractive to women"! It had a cheap, tinselly sound. "Maidens,

like moths, are ever caught by glare." He had not shown any "glaring" qualities—at least, only once, one day, on the island, he had been a little, a *very* little, impulsive—but one never knew, of course; and she had invited him to come, and said she would be alone—

"The others have unexpectedly gone driving," she announced, with dignity. "I was *de trop*, and so you find me here."

"I hardly hoped to have the good fortune to see you," said Branscomb, with almost too perfect tact. "But I was passing, and stopped on the chance. May I sit with you till the 'others,' whoever they may be, return?"

Somehow, his tacit acceptance of the fact that she wished to ignore the rendezvous she had given him that afternoon, vexed her. It would have seemed less intimate and more natural to protest. He gave her, however, no opportunity to nurse her vexation. He found himself a chair, not too near her, and began at once to explain briefly the object aimed at by the book he had brought.

Her attention was excited, and she speedily forgot everything else in her effort to follow the line of his argument. He was brilliant and impersonal, yet always ready to concern himself with her views, treating them with a deference which was in itself the subtlest flattery. Caroline became conscious of the lateness of the hour only when the butler, unaware of her presence on the veranda, apologized for having come to shut the house for the night. It was long after twelve.

Branscomb laughingly declared that his hostess's gates would be closed against him, and that he had forgotten to inform himself of the character of the watch-dog. He begged her forgiveness for having kept her up such an unconscionable time. Mrs. Vinton, with her usual little impulsive rush of speech, exclaimed that the clocks must be wrong; the evening could not have passed so quickly

—except that, of course, pleasant things always did—and she added, with a charming, frank smile, that she felt it was a great compliment that he should consider her capable of understanding all his thoughts and theories, and that he should be willing to explain to her his reasons for holding them.

"When you are of world-renowned fame, I shall remember, with pride, that you spent this evening with me," she said; and no earnest disciple could have expressed appreciation for a teacher more simply. But Branscomb either failed to understand her or lost his head suddenly.

He caught her in his arms, and burst out into an excited confession of ardent admiration, devotion, love, in a storm of words that completely drowned her agitated protests. He hardly knew what was taking place till he found that she had torn herself away from him, and was shrinking back against the wall, entreating him to go—to go at once.

A door banged somewhere in the distance.

He looked at her in bewilderment for an instant, murmured some broken sentences of entreaty for pardon, to which she replied only by bowing her head, and then, catching up his coat, took himself away through the moonlight and shadow.

Mrs. Vinton gazed after him with the expression of a child whose favorite toy has just come to pieces in its hand—puzzled, offended, disappointed, a little hurt, a good deal excited. She had not expected their interview to end like this. She had a feeling that she would like to tell some one about it, and ask if *she* had been to blame. If only Fred were broader-minded—one might, perhaps—but, of course, he would be furious, and, besides, one couldn't tell that sort of thing to one's husband. Diana would understand. And, by the way, where was Diana? They must surely have come in.

"Hasn't Mr. Vinton come back?" she asked the butler.

No, Mr. Vinton had not returned. Were the servants to sit up for him?

Mrs. Vinton said she "supposed somebody had better," and trailed her sweeping flounces slowly up-stairs. It was very odd. She hoped nothing had happened. She couldn't help being anxious, remorseful, almost alarmed. She put on a dressing-gown, and sat up, reading and waiting, in her room. Somehow, Fred's faults faded during a contemplation of her own mistakes and shortcomings. It was after one o'clock when she heard wheels on the gravel below her window. She opened it, and leaned out.

"Are you all right?" she called. "I thought you must have had a breakdown. I was really worried."

And Diana's voice replied: "Why, is it so late? I'm sorry. No, nothing happened, only, we went farther than we intended. It was too beautiful. I enjoyed every minute of it, and even Fred was enthusiastic at times."

Fred's wife drew in her pretty head with a rather curious, not to say perplexed, expression of countenance.

All desire for confession left her; after all, she had a right to her own experiences.

"This is a new departure for you," she said, as he came slowly through his room and stood for a moment at the door of hers, winding his watch. "I should not think that you'd feel like yourself at all."

"I don't know that I do," he answered, somewhat confusedly. "Diana makes—that is, Diana is a most extraordinary woman."

"Nobody appreciates that more than I," declared Mrs. Vinton, emphatically.

On her breakfast-tray next morning appeared a note from Branscomb, begging her, if no pleasanter doings prevented, to excuse the shortness of the notice, and chaperon a party for him at Jordan Pond that evening. "This," said the note, "of course, includes Mr. Vinton, if he will so far honor the expedition." And underneath was written, "To show that you forgive my madness."

Caroline hesitated, and pondered for a few minutes. Branscomb knew she had no engagement, for she had happened to say so the night before. To decline seemed to show that she attached too much importance to his outbreak; to accept, that she attached too little. But she was curious in two ways; first, as to how he would behave in her company, and, second, as to how her husband and her visitor would get on without it. She finally accepted for herself, declined for Mr. Vinton, and, slipping out of bed and into her dressing-gown, pattered across the hall to Diana, who was sleepily sipping her tea and reading her letters, of which the powers below remarked that she got "a many in the same handwriting."

"You don't mind dining alone with Fred to-night, do you?" Caroline said. "I've promised to chaperon a sort of picnic party. He does not care about that sort of thing, because he's afraid the food won't be good—as if that made any difference! I don't know that I shall enjoy it, but one has to do such things occasionally, unless one wants to be disobliging. You don't mind?"

"Not at all," replied Miss Lee. "I will do my best to amuse him. You know, you asked me here for that especial purpose."

"I'm afraid, perhaps, *you* won't be amused. You see, Fred seems to have inherited all his opinions, with his fortune, from his father, and *he* was very positive and old-fashioned."

"I think I can stand it; I have before."

"You're so patient! I get tired of suppressing everything I want to say, for fear I shall be disagreed with and explained to, ponderously, for a course and a half. Still, it makes conversation."

"The whole trouble is he's much too good for you," said Diana, smiling.

Mrs. Vinton looked at her with interest, remembering the drive of the night before.

"So he is," she agreed. "It must be that that settles down so heavily upon him after dinner, and makes him

yawn so. It makes me yawn, too. I dare say you'll find yourself doing it. 'A good man after a good dinner takes a good nap.' He has not reached that point yet, but he may. I believe that was the reason, if you'd only confess it, that you didn't marry him. Well, you can fancy yourself married to him on this occasion, and see how you would like it."

"So I can. That will be rather interesting."

Mrs. Vinton made a little grimace. "Don't you *ever* marry, my dear, unless you're *frightfully* in love, and not then, unless his tastes agree with yours."

"And his habits are good, and he brings a character from his last place," suggested Diana, buttering her toast. "That's very important."

"If I'd asked you for Fred's, what would you have said?" asked Caroline.

"Goodness knows! I was not analytical in those days; but now——"

"Now, it's rather too late to put the question, isn't it?" exclaimed the other, hastily.

She got up, straightened the bow in her hair, wrapped her dressing-gown more closely about her, declared that her breakfast would be quite cold if she delayed another minute, and so departed.

At eleven o'clock, she sent to know if Miss Lee would like to walk to the village with her to do some errands, and Diana, descending, found her waiting in the hall with a great air of briskness.

"I'm as good as gold, my dear; I'm going to get all sorts of things for the household—new muslin for window-curtains, and more sofa-cushions for the veranda, and—let me see! I have a list somewhere—Fred says I don't take any interest, but the trouble is I feel as if it were the servants' house, not mine. Never mind, I'm going to be a perfect manager to-day. Come along. What are you looking at? Don't you like my orange frock?"

"Very much indeed. I only wish it were on my shoulders."

"Do you, my dear? I'll give it to

you as soon as we get home," said Mrs. Vinton, with ready generosity. "Fortunately, I've not worn it much. I like it, but Rosine hates to put it on me. She says 'it is not at all in the style of madame.' Perhaps she won't let you wear it, either."

"Do not let us outrage her feelings in any way," said Diana, laughing, and devoutly hoping that the eyes of Mrs. Sentinel would not be set upon them that morning.

This, however, was almost beyond the expectation of reason, and it was accordingly with more vexation than surprise that Miss Lee beheld a certain figure in a dove-colored mantle mincing down the street ahead of them. In vain she loitered before different shop-windows, and invented pretexts for stepping in to ask the price of various unnecessary articles. By the time they had paid a bill at the flower shop and reached the wonderful establishment presided over by Mr. and Mrs. Bee, the lady was not half a block in advance.

Diana looked down the steep little street as it sloped to the landing between its rows of prim little shops, and wished that she might suddenly inspire Mrs. Sentinel with that spirit which caused a whole herd of very worthy domestic animals to run violently down a precipitous place into the sea. This being impossible, she tried strategy.

"Do get me all the magazines for this month, Caroline," she said; "I've forgotten my purse."

Mrs. Vinton obediently entered the shop. Just then, Mrs. Sentinel looked back, caught sight of Diana and turned to join her, while, at the same moment, Fred Vinton suddenly appeared, coming out of the telegraph office, and the three presently stood together, talking in the sunshine outside the windows.

"I haven't seen you since the day you arrived," Mrs. Sentinel began, and then her gaze became fixed, almost cataleptic, magnetized by a spot of moving orange color in the shop. "Do you remember what I told you," she exclaimed, triumphantly, "about the girl in the yellow gown whom I saw

being made love to on the island the other day? The man was Branscomb—I've found *that* out—and now here's the yellow gown, and we shall know who *she* is."

"Which of the magazines do you want, Diana?" inquired Caroline, coming to the door. "I really can't buy them all, you know."

There was an instant's pause.

"If you are not color-blind, Mrs. Sentinel, there must be more than one orange girl in Bar Harbor," said Mr. Vinton, gravely; and, murmuring something about an engagement and not seeing them at luncheon, he lifted his hat and deliberately walked away.

"What is it all about?" said Caroline, as Mrs. Sentinel hurried across the street and they entered the shop.

Diana explained.

"What an odious woman! What a vulgar, horrid story about nothing!" cried Mrs. Vinton, in high disgust. "We took a boat, and paddled over to the point one morning—Mr. Branscomb and I. We read and talked. I said something he particularly liked, and he kissed my hand—both my hands. Anybody might have seen; why should I care?"

But the memory of a later scene brought a fine color to her cheek.

She was in an exceedingly contradictory state of mind all the afternoon; sometimes wishing she were an empress, with the power to bury Mrs. Sentinel and all other spies and gossips in the lowest dungeons of her castle, and sometimes that she were a simple working-woman, scrubbing floors for her living—a lot she considered infinitely to be envied. In a burst of confidence she suddenly told Diana of her last night's experiences, and then, as suddenly repenting herself, dashed away without waiting for the comment she had invited.

At half-past seven she whirled into Miss Lee's room again in a towering passion. Fred had ventured to say that he was sorry it was Branscomb's party. That was an insult. He should have ordered her to stay at home, if he felt in that Turkish way, or else he

should have been silent—she would be late in getting back. She begged Diana on no account to wait up for her.

Miss Lee and her cousin sat down to a comfortable tête-à-tête dinner at eight.

"This is better than picnic parties," observed Fred, with a sigh of satisfaction. "I wish to goodness Caroline did not like expeditions."

"A little real hardship would do you no harm," retorted Diana. "You are getting entirely too complacent and lazy. I begin to think I shall have to enact the part of that wise fairy godmother who came to Rosalba's christening, and said to her, as a parting benediction, 'The best thing I can wish you is a little misfortune.'"

"I don't understand you," said Mr. Vinton, amiably; "but then, I often labor under that disadvantage."

"I'll explain later," returned Diana, patiently, and at a little after nine she removed him to the veranda, where they sat in earnest conversation until twelve. At that hour, Mrs. Vinton returned, a good deal bored by the events, or, perhaps, lack of events, of her evening. One would not have a serpent sting one twice, but it is admissible to yawn when one has, out of bravado, stirred the reptile again with a furtive stick and found it apparently incapable of hissing.

Drawing off her gloves, she came slowly through the drawing-room toward the open window. As she neared it, she heard Diana say: "There is only one way, and that is mine;" and her husband exclaim: "It seems to me unnecessary and absurd, but if you insist——"

"I do insist. I see the necessity, and you've agreed to trust my judgment. I have told you all my heart, and—I shall go to-morrow morning. If you were not so obstinately in love with your own way, as well as your wife, Fred——"

"Well, what then?"

"Why, we might have spent a pleasanter sort of an evening," said Miss Lee, with a laugh and a sigh. There was a pause.

Caroline advanced another step. The two, outside, were standing where the light from the room fell full upon them. Diana's little figure was, for the moment, lost in her cousin's embrace.

"Dear Diana, what can I say? I'm a dull man, slow to take things in. I suppose I've made it hard for you. I'm sorry. But you fairly bewildered me. How could I tell that a woman would feel that way?"

"You might have seen for yourself, long ago, if you had used your eyes."

"Well, they're open now," said Mr. Vinton, with an impatient groan.

"And you wish I'd kept my own counsel," murmured she, "and suppressed myself and my feelings."

"That would not be very gallant. But—forgive me, my dear—the position you force upon me is a confoundedly difficult one."

He began to stride up and down the veranda as he spoke, and Caroline, turning, began to make her way as silently as possible out of the room. She had reached the door before Diana answered, but the first words came clearly to her:

"If you loved *me*, it might be hard, but as it is——"

Up-stairs in her room, Mrs. Vinton walked back and forth in her turn. What did it all mean? Diana really in love with Fred! Confessing it to him—declaring she must go!

Undisputed sway over Mr. Vinton and his heart for some years had induced in his wife the belief that this sway was indisputable; or, rather, a contrary opinion had never suggested itself to her. Fred had excellent qualities, but, somehow, it never occurred to her that they were such as would arouse a "grand passion" in anybody.

But Diana was accustomed to admiration. Many men had been attracted by her dove-like expression, her soft, saint's eyes and demure manner. She had no lack of suitors. If she cared for her cousin, there must be something—some power in him that Caroline had failed to recognize. And then, the engagement alluded to by

Diana—*could* it have been broken off against her will? What was one to think?

She was not angry. If Fred had been in love with his cousin—if they had been parted unwillingly, she would have done—she didn't know what—something, anything to bring them together, even now. But, apparently, he was not. No, decidedly she wasn't angry, but perhaps Diana *had* better go. Perhaps, after what had been said, after what she had overheard, matters would be simplified by her absence. And she and Fred need not of necessity be dull, even if they were left alone in the house. In regard to her husband, a certain feeling of curiosity was taking possession of her mind. If he himself had not changed, at least he stood out against a new background. Diana's preference must surely explain and justify itself.

She heard their voices in the hall. Fred went into his room. Diana came to her door and knocked.

"When did you get home, mouse of the world? I saw your coat in the hall."

"Just now. Were you sitting up for me?"

"Incidentally, while I talked to your husband."

"I shall know better than to leave you alone together next time," said Mrs. Vinton, with rather a forced laugh.

"There won't be any next time," answered Diana, gaily. "I've had a telegram from mama, begging me to come home for a few days before I go on to Newport, and I think I'll have to start to-morrow."

Diana's departure the next day, amid the confusion of hasty packing, took place without any particular conversation between her and her hostess. Caroline was kindness itself, but she appeared preoccupied. Fred was exceedingly gloomy, and showed a disposition to follow his cousin into corners for private confidences. These she felt it wiser not to encourage, but he managed to whisper, "I'll write," as he bade her good-bye.

She heaved a sigh of relief as the boat put off. Then she gave a sudden start, for, among the passengers, she caught sight of a pair of shoulders which she thought could belong only to her former traveling companion, Mr. Haldaine. The man, turning, proved to be a stranger; but, as is so often the case when one thinks one has seen a familiar face or figure, the real person was not far off, and Diana's eyes, wandering again to the group on the dock, actually beheld Haldaine, talking to the Vintons, who had both come down to see her off. If this were the first time he had managed to tear himself from North East Harbor, it was an amusing and remarkable coincidence that it should be the very hour she was leaving.

She reached home without incident, and settled down to a few days of comfortable inertia among her own belongings. At the end of the week two letters arrived from Bar Harbor. She opened Caroline's first.

DEAREST DIANA:

The most extraordinary thing has happened. I don't understand it in the least, but it seems that Fred—*Fred*, if you please, whom I considered the very personification of all the safe virtues—has been speculating—I don't see how he did it away off here, but I suppose through his brokers, by telegraph, don't you?—and he has lost a lot of money, and if we're not as poor as church mice we are a great deal poorer than we were, and must economize in all sorts of ways. Doesn't it sound interesting and romantic? Fortunately, Mr. Haldaine wants to take the house and all the servants for the rest of the Summer—that is, he says his sister does; she isn't comfortable where she is, and she's tired of North East, and he thinks she would like to move here at once. It seems a convenient arrangement—I mean, for us. And where do you think we are going? You'll never guess. We are going out West to see some mines Fred owns, which he thinks he could get more out of if he looked a little after them himself. I don't understand how, for I'm sure he knows nothing about mining. But he seems full of energy. He never yawns after dinner. We get out maps and discuss plans, and I tell him all the things I shall do to save money and yet make him comfortable, and all the things *he* is to do to make himself a great man, and he listens, as he never used to do, and tells me what a goose I am, and the evening goes in no time. I am learning to do my own hair beautifully—I sha'n't take a maid out

West. We are going to "rough it." The days aren't long enough for all I have to do and think about. We start at once. I don't know how long we may stay. I'm crazy to do everything but my own washing. Fred says he declines to let me cook, for both our sakes. He's really funny about it. I think he must be more like himself in the days when you liked him first.

Dear Diana, I didn't take him from you, did I? I know you are very dear to him, and once, from something I overheard—that night, you know, when you were talking so late on the veranda—I teared—I don't know what I feared! I love you very much, dear, and I hope you'll have everything some day to make you happy—and that you'll be as busy as I am. It's delightful!

Your always affectionate

CAROLINE.

Fred's letter, though by no means so descriptive, was very much to the point, and written in an exceedingly bad hand.

MY DEAR DIANA:

It works like a charm! You are the wisest person in the world, also one of the dearest. But how on earth was I to know that when most women can't be happy without luxuries, Caroline couldn't be happy *with* them? You said she wanted a legitimate outlet for her activity. She's got it! I'm almost hustled into activity myself to save the tag-end of a fortune I never lost, and I'm always having to confess to the most damn-fool recklessness of conduct, and the most earnest desire to give up all my fondly cherished habits and become a "new man." My destination is the White House, *via* the West, work, success, fame and clean politics! The pace is hard, but she's worth it. When do I recover my money?

Yours faithfully,

FREDERIC VINTON.

To which Diana replied:

Not until I give you permission. I can tell by her letters when poverty ceases to be necessary. By the way, dear Fred, *do* you remember what we could have said on the veranda that night to give an outsider the impression of love-making? I was urging this course upon you, and you had your forefeet planted, you may remember, like any mule. I recollect your complaining of the difficulties you'd have to encounter, and my saying that "if you loved *me*, it would be hard"—for I'm not easy to deceive—but with her it would be easy, or something like it. She overheard a word or two, and was troubled. But never mind. It will do no harm. Don't explain, and kindly commit to memory the fact that you and I were once engaged. That's very important.

This Western trip will do you a world of good. You are much handsomer when you

are thin. This is in the nature of a compliment, but you are behaving so well, and acting your part with such beautiful conscientiousness, that you deserve all the compliments in the world from your approving cousin. I am writing to your wife by the same mail. You will do well to ask to see the letter.

Yours affectionately,

DIANA LEE.

"And here," she added to herself, as she put the letter in the envelope, "endeth the first lesson."

PART II

A FEW days after this, Diana departed for Newport, where a piteous letter from her friend, Paulina Davenport, had summoned her.

Paulina was a little doll of a creature, with a pretty, frightened-rabbit face, a sensitive nose and large, near-sighted hazel eyes. How she had ever managed to secure the affections of the long-legged, light-hearted Lothario, whose name she bore, for a period protracted enough to admit of an ordinary engagement and marriage, was a surprise to all who knew them. Tom Davenport's nature was of that tender, yet volatile, kind that sighs to many, though it loves goodness knows how many more, and matrimony had not closed the gates of a heart through which it pleased him to let the fair sex wander in a continuous procession. His demure little wife, whose comfortable fortune helped considerably to grease the wheels of life for both of them, never thought of objecting to his various flirtations; but when his popularity grew and her quietness increased to such an extent that he began to be almost invariably asked out without her, she moped in silence for a few weeks, and then sent for Diana.

It had occurred to her not-too-brilliant perceptions that Tom stayed at home oftener and with more earnestness when there was another woman in the house, particularly if she happened to be a young and good-looking one. Diana was both of these, and yet, according to Paul-

ina's belief, not dangerous. Of some of her husband's friends she did not feel quite so sure.

It was a hot, foggy afternoon when Miss Lee arrived, and the first thing she noticed was the dismal condition of Paulina's front hair, which hung in little, damp strings over her forehead, giving her a forlorn appearance of which she seemed to be perfectly unconscious. She fussed a good deal in a gentle, and by no means incapable, way about Diana's trunks, and had so many directions to give that they were almost the last to leave the dock.

"Did you notice that lady who drove off just ahead of us?" she then inquired, eagerly, fumbling with her tiny hand for a huge gold lorgnon she carried. "In the victoria, with golden hair."

This remarkable description of a vehicle caused Diana so much merriment that for a moment she failed to discover the person indicated.

"There, there!" cried Paulina, as they crossed Thames street; "stopping at that shop—just getting out. It's Mrs. Lockhart."

Diana looked. "She's handsome, and rather highly colored, either by art or nature," she said. "But who is she? Is there anything extraordinary about her?"

"Nothing," mumbled Mrs. Davenport; "only—only, Tom admires her very much, and I wondered if you would."

"Tom's' taste and mine have never agreed but once, and that was when he married you," said Diana, "which was the best day's work he ever did."

Mrs. Davenport smiled a little, and then sighed, and then, turning her large, short-sighted eyes on her companion, observed, plaintively, that one saw very little of one's husband when one lived at a place like Newport.

"I don't enjoy going out very much, you know, and I got into the habit of refusing invitations for myself, but I accepted for Tom because he does like it, and now people are

very apt to ask him without me. Of course, I don't mind, but—it's rather dull."

"Dull!" cried Diana. "I should think it would be! You ought not to shut yourself up. You ought to be amusing yourself. Why aren't you?"

"I did go to one ball," confessed Paulina, "but my dress wasn't right, or something. Anyhow, I had a ghastly time, and Tom had to take me to supper, and I made up my mind I'd never go to another. It doesn't pay, you know, unless you are a great belle. I often wonder how these women manage it."

"Watch them, and find out."

"I do; but it isn't only the way they look; it's what they do and say, I suppose."

"Ask Tom."

Another faint smile illumined Mrs. Davenport's countenance.

"He only says he prefers me to be just what I am," she murmured, with mild complacency.

Diana sniffed. "That's about what I should have supposed he'd say," she declared. "Of course, he prefers you to be just what you are, but he'd admire you none the less for being quite different, I dare say. Suppose you treat him to a little variety—develop a violent temper, for instance."

"I'm afraid I couldn't do that," said Paulina, primly.

"I'm afraid you couldn't," conceded Diana, laughing. "We'll think of something else. Tell me what everybody is doing down here."

Her hostess, who dearly loved describing "functions," if she did not enjoy attending them, plunged into an accurate account of all the gaieties past and to come; what everybody wore, and what some people said of others; winding up with a very scandalous little tale, then in active circulation, about a pretty young married woman, two burglars and a parrot, the bird having kept the marauders at bay by constantly calling for protection upon a gentleman whose intimacy at the house had already

caused some comment. This delectable narrative lasted till they reached the Davenport cottage in Bellevue avenue, and Paulina observed a large red automobile standing before the door.

"I wonder if that's Tom," she said. "I shouldn't like him to hear me telling that sort of a story to you, Diana."

"On account of my youth and inexperience, or yours?"

Paulina giggled. "Well, of course, my dear, it doesn't make so much difference about me, as I'm a married woman. Still, Tom doesn't like me to listen to that kind of thing, or repeat it."

"Naturally not," returned her friend. "One never knows where lightning will strike."

"And he says that a flighty way of talking doesn't suit my style," added Paulina.

Miss Lee looked quizzically at the limp muslin dress, damp hair and demure face of the little lady as she got out of the carriage.

"Something must evidently give way, in that case," she remarked, "and I'm not sure but what it had better be the style."

"You always did say the most outrageous things, even at school, Diana," said Mrs. Davenport, taking her arm, and affectionately leaning upon it as they went up the steps and into the house together. "We never knew whether you were in fun or not."

"Mr. Haldaine and another gentleman are in the drawing-room, m'm, waiting for Mr. Davenport," murmured the butler, meeting them in the hall.

"Bless the man!" exclaimed Miss Lee, stopping short. "I left him at Bar Harbor. Why couldn't he stay there?"

"Jenkins in Bar Harbor? You must be mistaken. He's been with us for ever so long," cried Paulina, confused. "Oh, I see. You meant Mr. Haldaine. How funny of him to come at this hour! It can't be far from dinner-time."

"I believe Mr. Davenport is going out to the Golf Club with the gentlemen

for dinner, m'm," interposed the butler.

"Oh, then, if they've only stopped to go with him, I needn't rush in and entertain them," said Mrs. Davenport, with an air of relief. "But I'm very sorry Tom's going out just when you've arrived, Diana," she went on, her face falling. "I didn't know he was going, I do assure you. I think it must have been a sudden idea. I hope you don't mind—won't think it's rude?"

"Not at all," replied Diana. "Every man has his own engagements at Newport. Let us have one ourselves. Can't we telephone to the Reading Room, and find two possible men for dinner and a game of bridge afterward?"

"It's very late to get anybody," objected the unenthusiastic Paulina.

"Nonsense! Jack Appleby came down in the train with me, and lamented that his host and hostess were dining out to-night and leaving him alone. He's with the Nolands. What's their number?"

"But I don't know how to play bridge very well. I think I'm going to love it, but I've only just begun."

"You'll improve with practice."

"And, anyhow, that's only one man, and we want another."

"I'll get one," said Diana, abstractedly, turning over the leaves of the telephone book. The telephone was in a short cross-section of the hall, near the staircase. Paulina stood irresolutely on the second step watching her energetic visitor, and thinking she must be much less tired than she looked, or far more fond of men's society than she seemed, to be taking such an amount of trouble. Perhaps she was crazy about cards.

Diana found the number, gave the message to be sent, and was about to follow Mrs. Davenport up-stairs, when the door of the drawing-room opened, and a man's voice was heard exclaiming: "I've a good mind to go and start up the machine. I wonder what's keeping Davenport? We are late now. Not that I care. It will be confoundedly dull, and there are a lot of extra men!

"I'd chuck the whole thing for ten cents!"

"It's Mr. Lockhart," whispered Paulina, trying to escape.

"Ask him to dine with us," commanded Diana, backing out of sight.

"But—but he's—going——"

"He evidently doesn't want to go. Ask him to dinner, *please*, Paulina."

Mrs. Davenport descended, astounded, but obedient, and Miss Lee flew up-stairs. She turned by instinct into the room most likely to be a guest chamber, was welcomed by the sight of her trunks, and heard Tom Davenport run down-stairs and join in a confusion of voices in the hall below as she shut her door.

"Why under the sun did you make me ask that man to dinner?" said Paulina, rather sulkily, opening the door a few minutes later, and putting in her deplorable little head.

"He enters into my scheme of things," returned Diana, darkly, from under a curtain of fair hair.

"I didn't know you knew him."

"I don't."

"Then I don't understand you."

"Never mind. Is he coming?"

"Yes, and the other one, too. I didn't mean to have a party to-night, Diana. I wanted you all to myself."

"Poor Paulina!" said Miss Lee, separating the yellow veil with her fingers to allow one soft, malicious eye to gleam through. "You didn't know you were entertaining one vowed to frivolity. But I sha'n't be here very long, and I must make the most of my opportunities."

"Oh, of course, dear, if you can't be happy without company, I'm only too pleased to ask any one you like," answered Mrs. Davenport, with prim politeness and a touch of superiority.

"Thank you," murmured the visitor, meekly. "Stop in here before you go down, won't you? I've no means of knowing the time."

She dressed, however, with remarkable rapidity, and was ready long before Paulina returned, with her front hair so much curled as to make a startling contrast to the tightly strained

straightness of the rest, a large diamond star tipping over her forehead, a bag-like tea-gown of white lace trailing about her and a pair of funny, snub-nosed little bronze slippers appearing from under it. She was attended by a maid who had evidently been an heirloom in a family of elderly spinsters.

"Can Matilda do anything for you?" she inquired. "She has quite finished with me."

Diana declined, shuddering, and Matilda slowly disappeared like a Cheshire cat, the last thing visible being a rather sour grin, fading into the darkness of the hall.

The instant she was gone, Miss Lee seized her hostess by the shoulders and seated her, with some emphasis, on a chair in front of the dressing-table.

"Look at yourself in the glass," she cried, "and then shut your eyes and don't open them till I tell you."

Paulina, who was submissive, except when her obstinacy was roused, and who had, moreover, been accustomed to yield to Diana since the time when that young lady had taken her under protection in the school days already referred to, obediently blinked at her reflection, and then closed her eyes tightly. Every now and then she uttered a little scream as her hair was tweaked out here, or a particularly excruciating hair-pin was run in there, and once she almost whimpered when the tongs burned her; but, on the whole, she conducted herself with resignation, if not stoicism, and was rewarded by the sight of an astounding vision, when at last she was permitted to observe the results of her friend's handiwork.

A halo of wavy hair, tied, with apparent carelessness, by a blue ribbon, the diamond star pinning down the folds of the tea-gown in a way that absolutely showed her neck below the collar-bones—which hitherto she had imagined to be the only point proper to display *en demi-toilette*—Diana's own blue sash giving her the semblance of the elongated waist now so fashion-

able, and—could she credit her eyes?—a decided flush on her cheeks.

"Only nail-powder," said Miss Lee, laughing. "You seemed to need it, the damp air had bleached you so." And she rubbed her reddened polisher up and down Paulina's soft face near her ear. "It's a great improvement."

"It certainly is," declared the other, in an awestruck voice: "but isn't it an awful thing to do?"

"There are worse vices," returned Diana, flippantly. "Haven't you a pair of blue slippers?"

"Yes—but they're my best," Mrs. Davenport admitted, grudgingly. She had curious, old-fashioned notions of saving things for what she called "the proper occasion"—which hardly ever came.

"Go and fetch them."

"I'm afraid of Matilda."

"Then I will, and your stockings, too."

Paulina, as pleased with her new self as a child with a new doll, made the change with giggles of mischievous excitement, and the two ladies rustled down-stairs in great good-humor with themselves and each other.

"You look like a saint in Dresden china," said Mrs. Davenport, affectionately, "so coquettish in your figure, and so demure in your face. I hope Mr. Haldaine will fall in love with you at once. It would be a good thing, you know, Diana, for——"

"Mr. who?" cried Diana, with a start, stopping short on the landing.

"Mr. Haldaine. He's coming to dinner with Mr. Lockhart. I told you. Don't you remember? I said 'the other one, too.'"

"I thought you meant Jack Appleby, of course."

"No, we couldn't get him. The Nollands' wire was out of order. So I asked Mr. Haldaine, and he accepted. Apparently *he* didn't care about the Golf Club dinner-dance, either. I suspect Florence Dangerfield has gone away——"

"Is he supposed to be attentive to her?" asked Diana, mindful of Mrs.

Sentinel's gossip at Bar Harbor. "Do people talk about it?"

"Attentive! my dear! well, I don't see how you can be a friend of hers and not know *that*. Why, they say——"

"I suppose there's nothing they *don't* say! She is so foolish! I'm glad she has gone, though I should have liked to see her. What were you saying to me?"

"Only that Tom took those men as far as the Casino to send excuses and wait till we were dressed. He seemed surprised at their staying."

"I am myself. You didn't tell Mr. Haldaine that I was with you, I suppose?"

"Of course. You don't imagine he'd want to dine with *me* as the only lady?"

"I cannot believe my presence would be any inducement. I don't think he likes me."

"Why, he said he had not the pleasure of knowing you," cried Paulina, "and that he rather wanted to meet you, for men seemed to think you were good-looking, and women that you were clever, so, as it was almost impossible you should be *both*, he had a great curiosity to see which sex you had cheated."

"He's improving in epigram since he wrote his book," murmured Diana.

"I thought it was rather impertinent of him."

"In the intent to be witty one often trips over the edge of good taste."

"That's like the wise things we used to write in our copy-books," said Paulina, beginning to descend again.

"It's a pity our minds dismiss them as soon as our handwriting is formed," replied Diana, sententiously. "Well, I should not wonder if we had a more amusing evening than Tom will."

"Oh, I don't know," said Paulina, mournfully. "Mrs. Lockhart is there."

"And Mr. Lockhart is here. Fair exchange is no robbery."

"Oh, Mr. Lockhart!" exclaimed the

other, with a little sniff. "He's not very interesting. I suppose Mr. Haldaine is, but, of course, he's coming to talk to you."

Whatever had been Haldaine's reason for accepting Mrs. Davenport's invitation, his behavior during dinner would not have led any one to suppose that anxiety to meet Miss Lee had anything to do with it. After a ceremonious introduction, in which, if the gentleman were disposed to exhibit hypocritical formality, the lady seemed more than ready to meet him half-way, he turned his attention to his hostess, whom, indeed, he had never beheld to such astonishing advantage. Curled, flushed, pinched into shape, prodded into spirits, he could hardly believe that this was the forlorn, limp little creature of the afternoon. He made one or two rather audaciously insinuating speeches to her, and she absolutely laughed. She was worth cultivating. He was, fortunately, unaware that Paulina's attention had been completely distracted on both occasions by fear that her other guest would, in the ardor of illustrating naval maneuvers to Diana, cut her best tablecloth with the point of his knife. She would have laughed with abstracted civility at anything.

Mr. Lockhart was the kind of man born to be the husband of a beauty, and he had achieved his destiny. He was shrewd in business, lavish in expenditure, patient in admiration, long-suffering in temper, and not bad-looking to take about with one when occasion required it. He had only one hobby—an admiration for Lord Nelson—which did not in the least interfere with his usefulness as a husband, and he had been trained to do all the things a man taking his holiday at a modish watering-place should do—ride, drive, bathe, play tennis, golf, bridge, etc.—which provided him with occupation and kept him from dangle too much about his wife. He had eager manners, a suppressed voice, and always dressed beautifully. He was not often sought for himself

alone, and was almost touchingly gratified at the flattering earnestness Mrs. Davenport had displayed in securing him for dinner.

"I suppose perhaps she was in a hole," he observed to Diana, "and I was glad enough to get out of the other affair. These big spreads at the Golf Club are such a lottery. They're so scared of not getting enough men that they ask everything in trousers they meet, and then you're as apt as not to get pasted with an old hen at dinner, if you don't have to go in by yourself!"

The latter half of the sentence seemed to indicate that he was gracefully alluding to his possible partner at the table, and not to the feast itself.

Diana, wondering whether there was any limit to the vulgarity modern society was prepared to swallow, gilded—especially in the Summer—asked gently whether he had suffered no qualms of terror in regard to old hens when engaging himself to join their party.

"Now, I say, don't be sarcastic, Miss Lee!" cried the poor gentleman, collapsing at once. "You can't think how it paralyzes me. Of course, I'd never had the pleasure of meeting you before, but I knew by reputation how charming you were—only too clever for me, you see; and as for Mrs. Davenport!—do you know"—breaking off suddenly and lowering his voice to a confidential whisper—"I never thought she had it in her to look so well or be so lively. What has she done to herself?"

"Nothing, that I know of," answered his companion, coldly, and with perfect truth, seeing that any visible change in Paulina had not been the work of that lady's own hands. "Isn't she always like that? She used to be one of the prettiest girls I knew when she first grew up, and—I hope I sha'n't shock you, Mr. Lockhart—a perfect fiend for mischief."

"You don't say so!" cried Mr. Lockhart, in evident bewilderment; and he stole furtive, puzzled glances at his un-

conscious hostess from time to time during the rest of the dinner.

But if Paulina's improved appearance and manner surprised and attracted the attention of the masculine half of the company—who hitherto had had occasion to accord her little notice—her speedy mastery of the first principles of the game of bridge, her accurate memory, ardent interest and, at times, brilliant play, more than astonished Diana. There was no need for nail-powder when cards could produce that enchanting rose-color. The pupils of Mrs. Davenport's vague, blinking eyes expanded almost to their hazel rims, her loosened hair was brushed impatiently away by an eager hand which then hovered tremulously over the table like a white butterfly over a clover-patch. Her whole little, deliberate, persistent, near-sighted, narrow, gentle soul was utterly absorbed in the game.

Miss Lee, who had a very moderate liking for it herself—having indeed only suggested it as the first reason that occurred to her for getting a small party together—grew sleepier and sleepier as rubber succeeded rubber, and the hands of the clock crept on past midnight. They had not sat down to dinner till a quarter to nine, but, allowing an hour for that meal—and she was quite sure the admirable Jenkins had whisked them through it in less time than that—they had now been stewing over these tiresome cards and counters for twice sixty long minutes, and the other players showed no sign of weariness.

Haldaine observed her suppressed yawn with malicious solicitude.

"You appear fatigued, Miss Lee."

"I have had rather a long journey."

Paulina, who was dealing, her mind firmly concentrated upon the matter in hand, heard nothing. Mr. Lockhart, dreamily surveying the square of moonlit water visible through the open window, and wondering how the stock-market would go the next day, might have been a thousand miles away.

"You were staying with the Vintons at Bar Harbor a short time ago, were

you not?" said Haldaine, twisting his mustache to hide a smile.

"About two weeks ago—yes."

"I've just come down from there. You know my sister took their house when they left it. It's a very comfortable house."

"I found it so."

"I wonder if I did not have the room you had occupied—a large, pink apartment, looking west. I certainly chanced upon a piece of your property, forgotten or abandoned."

"Again!" was on the tip of Diana's tongue, but, remembering that he had chosen to ignore their first meeting, she changed it into a careless, "Nothing of vital importance, I fancy, since I have not missed it;" and hid another yawn by stooping to pick up a fallen card.

"It isn't a thing you'd be likely to miss," said Haldaine. "You could doubtless have a dozen more of the same kind, and any number of different varieties—if you cared to be troubled with them. I should be only too proud to contribute myself if I were found worthy."

"You are making me exceedingly anxious——"

"Not about anything a spinster-conscience could leave at large," he interrupted, mocking their previous conversation. "'Curious,' you mean, don't you?"

"Anxious to guess your riddle," completed Diana, calmly.

"Here's the answer, as far as my part of it goes," he said, his wonderful bright blue eyes glittering with mischief; and he held out to her, on the palm of his hand, the small photograph of a man on horseback surrounded by a pack of hounds.

"It's almost unrecognizable," observed the lady, indifferently turning her face rather more from the light than was altogether natural to a person endeavoring to discover a likeness.

"Still, you recognize it, don't you? I do."

"As belonging to me?"

He laughed, and turned it over. On the other side was written in large,

bold characters, "The property of Diana Lee," and then a date.

"Do you deny both the image and the superscription?" he asked.

The corners of her mouth began to curve a little. "It is dated some years back, you see," she said.

"Perhaps that's why you didn't miss it."

"Or perhaps it's no longer mine to miss."

"It does not seem to be under the dominion of any one else."

"Must a man be always under the dominion of some woman?"

"That particular man must."

"If we are to finish this rubber, we really must stop talking and begin to play," cried Paulina, sharply.

Diana, with a start, dropped the photograph into her lap, picked up her cards, and began to sort her hand.

There was a sound of quick steps in the hall.

"Good God!" exclaimed Tom Davenport, at the door, stiff with astonishment. "You don't mean to say you are keeping it up still! Why, I took your wife home half an hour ago, Lockhart! She said it was too hot for dancing, so we went round the Ocean Drive. Paulina, you are certainly bewitched. It must be the influence of Miss Lee."

He came forward and shook hands with Diana, apologizing with great earnestness for his unavoidable absence on the first night of her arrival.

"You're interrupting the game, Tom," said his wife, plaintively. "And I've been doing so well. I don't believe I've forgotten a single thing Mr. Tellwell taught me. And I've won about twenty dollars. Do go away till we finish this hand. You make me nervous."

Mr. Davenport had once, in the happy, careless days of childhood, been bitten to the bone by the meekest white mouse in the world—which he had inadvertently squeezed too hard. He experienced much the same sensation now on listening to this astounding address from his wife. The animation which excitement lent to her usually

demure features, the really startling change in her dress and general appearance were extraordinary enough; but that she should exhibit indifference, even irritation at his return, was something quite beyond the bounds of his experience, and entirely incomprehensible. He was rather dull at cards himself, having devoted such intelligence as he possessed to sport and the agreeable intricacies of flirtation, and therefore heartily despised the latest fashionable craze. In games of manual skill he ranked considerably above the average, and the hazard of pure chance was pleasing to him; but from the effort of mind and memory required by such play as his wife was engaged in, he shrank, appalled. He now lighted a cigar, crossed the room, and flung himself into a chair on the piazza, with an air of such sulkiness as delighted Diana.

Mr. Haldaine's impertinence had restored her to thorough wakefulness, and it was with artful alacrity that she joined her host for a moment when the party at last broke up, whispering that she had never seen Paulina looking better, and that the guardianship of such a pretty, petulant, spoiled little lady as she had evidently become must be a very serious care to him.

Mr. Davenport stared in amazement. This view of the case presented itself to him for the first time. Then he laughed.

"Paulina! Why, she won't go anywhere. I can't get her to accept an invitation. She is certainly the 'neatest, sweetest and completest' pattern of all the domestic virtues in miniature, but—she doesn't take much interest in people, socially. I wish she did."

"I suppose she takes her pleasure at home," said Diana, innocently. "She always had a funny, furtive little way of amusing herself, even at school. We never knew what she was about."

Mr. Davenport cast a look of incredulity, dashed with vague uneasiness, at her; then he laughed again.

"She makes that complaint of me," he said, "that she doesn't know what I'm about."

"Isn't she sly!" exclaimed Diana, as if forced to reluctant admiration.

"That's the last thing I should accuse her of," said he, angrily.

"Of course, of course," returned Miss Lee, apparently hastening to retrieve an error. "You can't suppose I was serious." And she turned from him to bid good night to Haldaine.

"Thank you very much for taking the trouble to return me my photograph," she said, banishing all expression from her face.

"Don't mention it. I am amply repaid," he answered, presenting an equally blank countenance for inspection.

Mr. Lockhart, who had been settling accounts with himself in a corner, stuffed a crumpled roll of bills into a convenient pocket, made his adieus, and vanished in the wake of the other gentleman.

"I've had *such* a nice evening," cried Paulina, absolutely skipping over the ledge of the French window out upon the piazza. "I love bridge—I feel as if I could sit up all night—and it was twenty-five dollars I won, Tom. It's the first time I ever played for money. It seemed horrid to take it at first, but they insisted. I think I'll buy some new bath towels with it, or have all the copper saucepans relined. Tom, if you'd stayed away a little longer, there's no telling what I might not have done. I was in such luck. How much did you lose, Diana?"

But Diana was already nodding a good night from the door.

Miss Lee hated early rising—that is to say, appearing before eleven o'clock—but in her zeal for the embellishment of Mrs. Davenport she contracted the daily habit of hurrying over her own dressing to superintend the last details of her friend's toilette, and encountered many wry faces from Matilda when, a few mornings later, she insisted upon the changing of a somewhat crumpled white muslin for a pretty lilac linen; and a faded, fine "picture hat" for something smaller, smarter and more suitable. They were

going to the tennis tournament at the Casino.

"But all the color will fly in the sun," objected Paulina, fingering her skirt, disconsolately.

"It couldn't fly doing better service," returned Diana. "What did you buy the dress for—to hang up in your wardrobe?"

Mrs. Davenport sighed, and yielded the point. She paused as they passed Diana's door, and looked up at her shyly.

"Do you think I've got *quite* enough color this morning to be wearing mauve?" she inquired, turning a timid cheek to the light.

"Plenty," said Miss Lee, laughing. "The sun won't make *your* color fly. The lily needs no painting. That's only for special occasions."

Paulina sighed again, and again yielded. Any dressing that did not consist in merely putting on your clothes for the sake of dignity and decency, was as much "dressing up" to her as a long-tailed gown and a full-grown bonnet would be to a child. But she had not been entirely blind to the effect of Diana's efforts on the first occasion, and as long as they were again directed to her adornment she felt that nothing should be neglected. Still, if nail-powder were superfluous, far be it from her to desire it. She blushed, and went on at once.

"I don't enjoy tennis very much, do you?" she asked, as the carriage turned into Bellevue avenue and joined the long line of vehicles waiting to deposit their gaily-dressed occupants at the Casino entrance. "People don't talk to one much—at least, they don't to me—and, if I watch the ball very closely, it tires my eyes. Tom loves it. He went on ahead half an hour ago."

And, indeed, the tall gray figure of Mr. Davenport was presently discovered by the two ladies, as they crossed the round lawn inside the ring of the old brown building. He was strolling with a lady whose delicate-flowered muslin skirts and lace petticoats swept and trailed along the grass with a care-

less ease that mocked the tight clutch of Paulina's grasp on her neat lilac frock. As they passed him, his glance fell with surprised approval upon his wife, and as he took off his hat he smiled, and called out to Diana:

"How did you induce her to come?"

"I couldn't keep her at home," returned Miss Lee, smiling back; "she must have an appointment with some one."

Mr. Davenport's appreciation of this joke was so hearty as to excite the languid curiosity of his beflowered companion, and she left off her efforts to attract the attention of a still more gorgeously attired intimate, who was leaning against the balcony talking to a group of men, and turned round.

"Oh, it's Mrs. Davenport," she said, screwing up her powdered eyelids under her white veil. "You don't come here often, do you? It is stupid, isn't it, except now and then? Haldaine tells me you play such a wonderful game of bridge. I wish you and Miss Lee would come and dine with us to-night—just a small party. I won't ask Mr. Davenport, because I know he hates bridge." She looked up to throw a conciliatory smile at that gentleman, but he had just been buttonholed by a bore, and heard nothing.

Now, this was the very first time that the lady in question—a most important person in her own eyes and the eyes of her neighbors—had ever taken any notice of little Mrs. Davenport, beyond the empty civility of sending her invitations to large balls once or twice a year, whereas Mr. Davenport was in such constant demand for small dinners, yachting parties and excursions of all sorts that he was almost regarded as one of the household.

Paulina, therefore, flushing a little at the negligent informality of the suggestion, was about to decline, when Diana, putting a warning hand on her arm, answered for her.

"I believe we half-promised to go on a foolish party to Freebody Park to-night," she said. Freebody Park was an open-air vaudeville performance sometimes patronized by the friv-

olous. "But I see our host in the distance, and he has the contrite expression of one about to break bad news. We may find ourselves free to come to you. I will let you know in a few minutes, Mrs. Grist." And she passed on, drawing Paulina after her.

"How *could* you say we had half-promised to go to Freebody Park?" exclaimed Mrs. Davenport, breathless and reproachful.

"I should have said half of us have promised. I am going on a party of Jack Appleby's. We arranged it in the train coming down, and *you* are going to Mrs. Grist's."

"I would not go for the world, Diana. She has never asked me to dinner before, and I do not intend to accept any such sudden, off-hand invitation. You may know her well enough, but I am not sufficiently intimate with her to be approached in that informal way. I consider it very insolent."

"So it is," agreed Diana. "Only, she doesn't mean it. She knows me quite well enough to ask me like that, and she took the opportunity to-day, not because she wanted me, but because she wanted you—"

"To play bridge!"

"Well, why not? You don't suppose people ask one another to dinner nowadays because their grandmothers were friends, or because they're overflowing with love and good-fellowship toward every inhabitant of the place they live in? They ask you because they find you suitable or agreeable, or both. You and Mrs. Grist happen to be crazy about the same game, at present. There's a bond between you. She hears of it, and asks you to come and play with her. She might have done it more ceremoniously, but she certainly did not mean it as an insult."

"She never took the trouble to ask me before," said Paulina, obstinately, "and she asks Tom all the time."

"She particularly didn't ask Tom this time, and you know you have been doing your best to convince people that you did not like going out."

"I don't."

"I promise you that you will enjoy yourself this evening."

"I don't see why you want me to go," moaned Paulina, giving way.

Diana made no reply, but managed that a polite message should be conveyed to Mrs. Grist, and followed her friend into the enclosure, through the throng of people walking or standing about, and up among a sea of faces, half of them nodding and smiling pleasantly in greeting, to their places in the very last row of the grand-stand. Mr. Lockhart, whose seat happened to be next theirs, welcomed them warmly, and informed them that the champions were just returning to the court after a short rest.

"Oh, then that's why we found Tom outside," observed Paulina, complacently. "I thought it was queer that he should be willing to miss a stroke of the championship game."

"There he comes with my wife," said Mr. Lockhart, cheerfully. "He told me not to wait for her because he had to. They've got some scheme on for to-night."

"I'm rather glad, after all, that you made me accept Mrs. Grist's invitation, Diana," declared Mrs. Davenport, with a little flash of anger, "for since you and Tom both had engagements I should have been left quite alone."

She turned to Mr. Lockhart and began to talk, or, as she would have said, "converse," with a nervous volubility quite at variance with her usual prim manner; and he, amused by the dignity of her words and the simplicity of her ideas—through which ran an occasional gleam of unexpected humor—responded willingly enough. It was not often that the husband of the beautiful Mrs. Lockhart was addressed or listened to with such flattering attention. He had soon confided his admiration for Nelson, and she had confessed to a timid partiality for Oliver Cromwell, who, she said, always seemed to her such a sensible; downright sort of man, so different from

the licentious cavaliers of Charles's court.

She made this comment with such perfect artlessness and earnestness that her companion, perceiving her to be quite unconscious of anything remarkable in her mode of expression, nearly tumbled backward off his seat with suppressed amusement.

"You're dead right, Mrs. Davenport," he managed at last to reply, "but I'm afraid you wouldn't find many women to agree with you. They like the cavalier style."

"I suppose they *were* nice as lovers," said Paulina, reflectively, "but they couldn't have made good husbands or fathers of families."

"And you think Cromwell would?" murmured Mr. Lockhart, in an ecstasy. He had never met any one quite like Mrs. Davenport.

"I'm sure he'd have been dependable," answered the little lady, with an involuntary sigh, as she glanced sidewise toward a distant corner where her husband made one—apparently the favored one—of a little court surrounding the azure draperies and drooping feather of the snow-white, rose-red and ebony-tressed Mrs. Lockhart. The attention of Mr. Davenport seemed, for the moment, somewhat distracted from his beloved tennis.

"I think," said Paulina, "that I'll go home. The sun is giving me a headache. Do you mind, Diana?"

Diana detached her attention from the murmured words of the gentleman on her other side.

"Not at all," she answered; "but will the carriage be there?"

"Let me take you home in my machine," begged Mr. Lockhart.

Paulina gratefully accepted, and, much to the indignation of the interested spectators, the two made their plunging, bounding way from seat to seat until they reached the ground and were lost in the crowd.

Miss Lee remained until the match was over and America, victorious, had shaken hands with England across the net. As she and her escort joined the

departing stream—gay as a rippling river of flowers—Tom Davenport sauntered up, handsome and happy.

"Something like tennis, that, wasn't it?" he said. "Isn't Lockhart with you? I thought I saw him. His wife wants him."

"That is too bad," said Diana, gravely, "because he has just gone off with yours."

"Off with mine! With Paulina! I thought she was behind you. Where did they go?"

"Oh, somewhere in his automobile," answered Miss Lee, carelessly, over her shoulder. "I told you she had an appointment. Are you coming home in your own carriage? If so, I need not trouble Mr. Appleby to put me into it. He's already half an hour late for luncheon."

Mr. Davenport came with unusual submissiveness, and Miss Lee talked to him all the way to the house about the curious influence of one character upon another, and the gradual, though marked, increase of frivolity she had observed in Paulina since her marriage.

"It would have been impossible for you, dear Mr. Davenport—dear *Tom*, then—to have selected any one who did not have unusual charm; but, upon my word, I'm afraid that, by precept and example, you have taught Paulina to use hers too recklessly. You will forgive my speaking so openly, in view of our being such old friends—indeed, there was a time, you remember—when perhaps friendship was a misleading name for the feeling I—we—entertained—for—" She faltered.

Tom, in the hurry of the moment, found it impossible to run through a list of all the ladies who had "entertained feelings" for him, reciprocated or not. He did not happen to remember that Miss Lee was among the number—as, indeed, in reality she would have scorned to be—but neither could he remember that she was *not*; so he sighed, and looked at her with a sort of safeguarded tenderness.

"You have taught Paulina many things," went on Diana, greatly en-

joying herself. "She is growing exceedingly sophisticated and worldly. You do not notice the change, of course, because you are so much with her."

"She complains that I am not with her enough," exclaimed Mr. Davenport, glad to find his feet on firm ground again.

"Not to me," gravely shaking her head. "She seems only too well satisfied with her liberty. Now, I ask myself, what does she do with it? Oh, Tom, seeing the roguish joy you take in such things, *can* she have become flirtatious? It is very catching."

"I should like to know with whom? I've seen no signs of it."

"Well, that relieves my mind," said Diana. "She used to be a perfect pitfall to the clergy. She had a nice little fortune, you know, and looked so good and said such surprising things. They never could resist her. And she had the same effect upon doctors."

"It seems to me I *have* found the parson at afternoon tea once or twice," muttered Tom, half-vexed, half-amused. "And she certainly sends for Steel whenever anybody has a finger-ache. Good-looking fellow, Steel."

Diana sighed. "Well, I'm glad you find no fault," she said.

"It's rather the other way round."

"Indeed, no! You are quite mistaken. She's perfectly contented with you and her life and everything. I've sometimes thought she might be a little—well—jealous, you know; but she always says, 'No, when people live as much in the world as we do, each must go his own way and not torment the other.'"

"Good little soul!" cried her husband, enthusiastic, but slightly chagrined. "She hardly lives enough in the world to know what it is like. She has no self-confidence; I must insist upon her going about more."

As they stopped at the door, the butler came out to meet them.

"If you please, sir," he said, "Mrs. Davenport has just telephoned that Mr. Lockhart's automobile ran away with him, and he could not stop it till

he got nearly to the Fishing Station. They are remaining there for luncheon with some gentleman whose name I did not catch. Mrs. Davenport hoped that Miss Lee would order the carriage and meet her at the polo ground at four o'clock."

"I'll go and fetch her myself, directly after luncheon," exclaimed Tom, angrily, to Diana. "The automobile at two-thirty, Jenkins! She can go back to polo later, of course, if she pleases. I never before knew her to fly off in this haphazard way, Miss Lee, I assure you."

"I suppose you are generally off in your own haphazard way first," said Diana, who was secretly quite as surprised as he, and Mr. Davenport looked thoughtful while he hastily ate the excellent food Paulina's care had provided.

The instant he left the house, Diana hurried to the telephone. Anybody listening—though it is to be hoped that nobody relieved the tedium of dish-washing in the pantry by listening—might have heard this one-sided conversation:

"Paulina, is that you? Mr. Davenport seems to be anxious about your safe return, and he has just gone himself to fetch you. Sweet of him! Oh, yes, very. But I was going to say, if Mr. Lockhart's machine is under control now, why don't you start at once and meet him half-way? What? *Meet him half-way*, I said. To relieve his anxiety and save him the trip. He'll be quite satisfied if he sees you. Mind you look brave—as if you were enjoying yourself. What? *Enjoying yourself*. Frightened? Well, I should have been, too, but since it's all right now, I would let Mr. Lockhart bring me home. He'll be so mortified if you don't. What? No, we needn't go to polo. You've had enough excitement. That's a good girl! I'm a busybody, I know, but, I trust, not a thankless one. Good-bye."

Miss Lee hung up the receiver, and went to her room with the air of one who hopes to have brought a skilful bit of diplomacy to a satisfactory conclusion.

The return of Paulina later, somewhat dusty and disheveled, in Mr. Lockhart's automobile, confirmed this. She came at once, like a child, to Diana's room to recount her adventures. How alarmed she had been at first, how well Mr. Lockhart had managed, how lucky it was that the road was clear! She seemed to have rather enjoyed her enforced meal at the funny little Fishing Station on the rocks, where an old friend of her father's happened to be staying, and to have accepted with docility a suggestion that she should stop where she was till the time came to go and join her guest and the rest of the gay world at the polo field near by.

"But, of course, when you telephoned that Tom was anxious, I thought as long as the machine was all right again—something had got jammed, you know, and the brake wouldn't work—I'd better come. I must say, Tom looked awfully cross when we passed him."

"People often do when they are anxious."

"I wanted to stop and get in with him, but I was afraid, as you said, it might hurt Mr. Lockhart's feelings."

"It certainly would have."

"Still, I'd rather hurt his feelings than Tom's."

"Tom's feelings are not so easily hurt. He says he would like you to go about and amuse yourself with more self-confidence. Besides, if *he'd* been with some lady, you wouldn't have expected him to leave her and get in with you!"

"I shouldn't have expected it, but I should have wanted it," said the truthful Paulina; "especially if he'd been with Mrs. Lockhart."

Diana laughed. "Perhaps he knows now just how you feel."

Mrs. Davenport stared. "You can't mean that Tom would ever be jealous of me, and—oh, if I thought that, I'd never speak to Mr. Lockhart again!"

Alarmed lest she should have defeated her own object, Miss Lee hastily disclaimed any such idea, adding, however, that she did not believe a little jealousy was bad for husbands.

"It's not so much that I should mind Tom's being jealous," said Paulina, with the sudden and candid adaptability that she had shown before about the rouge, "though I knew he never could be jealous of me; but if he were, I should like it to be about some one more attractive than Mr. Lockhart—not but what he is very kind," she added, as an afterthought, and went creeping off, in her little dormouse way, to lie down in her room.

She was used to spending a good deal of time up-stairs, arrayed in a prim, old-fashioned dressing-gown of indeterminate pattern, with her hair rolled up over various curling-pins and tied with narrow ribbons until she looked like a white Topsy.

Nothing but Diana's horror-struck remonstrance that it was not "decent to allow any one—most particularly one's husband—the shock of seeing anything so unbecoming," had broken her of her habit of wandering about the halls in this costume. The indecency of ugliness was something new to Paulina, but she began to take the lesson to heart, and was fortunately attired in a new lace-ruffled sacque, with her hair inoffensively falling about her shoulders, when she heard Tom's automobile puffing on the driveway under her window. She parted the curtains, and peered out. He was all alone. She thrust out her head.

"You see I am safely home, Tom. You didn't particularly want me to come back with you, did you?"

"What the—what do you suppose I went out there for?" asked Mr. Davenport, whose temper was distinctly upset. "However, it's no matter, as long as you are all right. By the way, I want to ask some people to dinner to-night—is it convenient?"

"I thought you were going out?"

"Not for dinner. There's some sort of fandango at the Lockharts' later. A surprise party in masquerade. Their house is all upset. That's why I want them to dine here."

Paulina stiffened. "Of course you can have whom you please," she said.

"I will give the orders. I am dining out myself."

"What!" cried Tom, almost in a shout of surprise, thinking, for a minute, that this was a declaration of war.

"I promised Mrs. Grist that I would dine with her and play bridge," explained his wife, meekly. "I thought you knew."

Which was of itself astonishing enough to give Mr. Davenport food for reflection as he puffed away.

On this occasion, Paulina was as anxious about her appearance as Diana could possibly desire, and prinked and peered at herself like some vain little bird. She had all her ornaments out for inspection, and was exceedingly fussy about the set of her gown. She had yielded to Miss Lee's suggestion of a hair-dresser—to show Matilda a fashion somewhat newer than that obtaining in the days of Mrs. Noah—and her charming head, crowned with puffs and curls and delicious little unexpected shining loops of hair, amply repaid Monsieur Jean—as he said several times—for the trouble he had taken with it. She accepted her best opera-cloak from her friend's hands without one reference to the fact that it was a cloudy night, portentous of rain, and skipped into the carriage quite elated, except for the fact that Tom had not seen her in all her glory.

Diana, during the progress of the entertainment at Freebody Park—Mr. Appleby's party had four boxes and were, with the exception of himself and Miss Lee, so noisy as to draw the attention of the audience almost entirely from the paid performers—found time to wonder more than once how the little creature was enjoying herself.

Almost everybody was going on to the Lockhart surprise party, and Tom Davenport expressed himself as disgusted with his guest's lack of spirit when, after her companions had dropped her at home, she declared that she could not face the exertion of changing her gown and starting out in pursuit of fresh dissipation.

He had had a very gay and pleasant dinner, and was in excellent humor with himself and all the world. She, on the contrary, seemed tired and depressed.

"Paulina has infected you with the stay-at-home microbe," he declared. "She wouldn't go if she died for it."

"When did she get back?" inquired Diana.

"I thought I heard her come in half an hour ago, but as my people were still here, and she did not have the complaisance to stop in the drawing-room, as she should have done, I can't be sure."

But search revealed the fact that Mrs. Davenport had not yet returned, and, anathematizing the folly of bridge-whist players in general, her husband departed, rather sulkily.

Diana undressed slowly, and went to bed, but it seemed to her that she had been asleep only a few minutes when the light of a lamp, insufficiently shaded by a small hand, and the rustling of skirts startled her into consciousness again. Paulina was just turning to creep out of the room.

"Oh, I'm sorry I woke you," she cried, "but I couldn't help coming in. I've had such a splendid time. I had two nice men to talk to at dinner, and then we played bridge, and I did so well! It seemed as if I couldn't help winning. I never took my mind off the game for a moment. I remembered every card. And I'm going to dine there again next Monday. Oh, and I'm going to dine with Mrs. Minching on Wednesday, and Mr. Loiterer—that funny old man who carries his head on one side like a parrot, you know, and says things everybody laughs at—asked me for Thursday. They're all bridge parties, so Tom wouldn't care to go, even if he were invited. And, do you know, Diana, I think I am always going to wear my best gowns, for when I've once made up my mind to do it I find it does give me more confidence—among the women, you know. You said Tom liked me to have confidence. Oh, and Diana, I'm awfully sorry to

keep you awake, but there's something more. Where do you think I went after I left Mrs. Grist's?"

"Not to Mrs. Lockhart's surprise party?"

Paulina nodded.

"Yes, they were all going. I knew I *must* be invited, out of decency, and if she could dine at my house without seeing me, I thought I could go to hers without seeing her, and I felt that I *never* could go to sleep if I *did* come home, and—and—I thought I looked quite nice, and I wanted Tom to see me, and I—well, I did want to see how he—how he behaved, you know, and to watch how other women managed to make themselves attractive, so I got a mask——"

"But you had no domino?"

"Why, no one had ever seen that long lace opera-cloak—you must admit, Diana, that it is *sometimes* wise to keep things nice for an *occasion*!—and I put the great, hanging hood over my head, and except just for the women at the dinner, nobody knew me. It was so exciting!"

"Whom did you talk to?"

"Oh, I didn't know half the time. That was the amusing part. All the men were dressed like monks, and had pieces of cloth with eyelet holes over their faces. But I didn't talk much at all, I was so busy listening."

"Well, what did you hear?"

"A great many funny things I didn't understand, but there's one thing I've learned," and she nodded a rather touzled head with great wisdom. "You mustn't be afraid to talk about yourself, if you want to be seductive." Paulina's choice of words was as innocent as it was bold. "I was standing all by myself on the lawn near the conservatory window, and I heard Mrs. Lockhart's and Tom's voices behind me—they weren't trying to disguise them at all—so I just slipped in, not to embarrass them, but I couldn't get any farther because there was another couple in the conservatory, and I was even more afraid of embarrassing *them*, they were so—absorbed. So there I was stuck, you see, and I

couldn't help hearing the sort of things Mrs. Lockhart was saying to Tom just outside."

"That was what the novelists would call an 'interesting situation,'" said Diana, wondering what was coming next.

"It may have been a situation," returned Paulina, "but I didn't think it was very interesting. However, Tom seemed interested, so I thought I'd do the same thing, and as soon as I could move I found a little lonely man in a corner, and I practised first on him—word for word—everything Mrs. Lockhart said to Tom. He seemed excited, but I thought afterward that might be because he was getting tired of sitting so long by himself."

Diana laughed, and Paulina smiled for sympathy; she herself saw nothing humorous in her candid narrative.

"By-and-bye," she continued, "Tom was free. I knew him by a red rose *she* had pinned on his monk's gown, so I left the little man and joined him. I thought, at first, he'd know me, but he didn't seem to—I suppose he never expected I'd be there—and I'd put my biggest ring in my mouth to make my voice queer. I nearly swallowed it once or twice—wouldn't that have been awful? So then I got him to take me outside, and we sat under a big tree, and the moonlight was beautiful, and I told him all the very same things she'd told him—only in a little different way."

"What sort of things, Paulina?"

"Why, 'how hard it was for a woman to seem gay when the person for whom she cared most was, by the exigencies of society, kept from her'—quite as if Mr. Lockhart neglected her, which I'm sure he doesn't, more than he's encouraged to do—and how it was 'scarcely to be wondered at if she did her best to drown the ache of her heart in a whirl of excitement'—and something about the 'impossibility of sitting at home and letting her thoughts dwell on what might have been,' and the 'danger of marrying in haste,' and the 'temptations that surrounded a woman whose husband does not take

the trouble to understand her'—I didn't repeat it quite word for word to Tom, as I did to the little man, because I was afraid he'd recognize it, but I used all the ideas, and he was quite touched, and said I was an angel and my husband didn't deserve me. He kissed my hand, too. *Do you suppose he kisses her hand often, Diana?*"

"I do not," said Miss Lee, with perfect truth.

"I'm glad of that," said Paulina. "Well, that's about all, except that he was awfully attentive to me after that, and I had the greatest difficulty to get home without his seeing me. He must *never* find out who it was! It's funny what attracts men, isn't it?"

"Very," answered Diana.

Paulina kissed her, and went smiling and yawning to bed, for daylight was already showing through the slats of the shutters.

"I want to tell you something," said Tom, joining Miss Lee on the piazza the next morning—Mrs. Davenport was for once sleeping the late sleep of light-hearted dissipation. "That little lady of mine is the most sweet-tempered, gentle, confiding, long-suffering angel that the Lord ever made. Do you know, she went to that wild party last night, I believe, for no other purpose than to let me know in the most touching way how my infernal foolishness wounded her at times. You said she was perfectly contented and satisfied. Well, she isn't. How could she be? I'm a damned ungrateful brute to give her a moment's uneasiness. We're none of us worth the caring of a good woman," sighed Mr. Davenport, comfortably dismissing his particular fault with the whole school of Adam's errors. "I hadn't an idea she was there, you know, until quite late in the evening, when Mrs. Grist pointed her out to me. She was sitting by a little man in a corner, but she jumped up and joined me at once, and she took me outside, and then and there she told me just how she felt about things. It was the prettiest thing you ever heard. She pretended to think I couldn't

know her, and she gave it to me, I can tell you. She even hinted at being driven to show a little spirit on her own account. She was charming."

Tom leaned back in his chair in gratified, flattered, pleasantly conscience-stricken reflection.

"I don't see how she knew *me* so quickly," he observed, after a pause, smiling complacently.

"She didn't," replied Diana, lying with intrepid calmness. "She never knew you at all."

"The evolution of Mrs. Tom Davenport is the talk of all Newport," wrote some one to Miss Lee, after her return home. "She dresses beautifully, she goes everywhere, and Tom trots after her like a big dog. He's a changed man. He hasn't eyes or ears for any one but his wife, and is even learning to play bridge—very badly—that he may be included in all the parties she is asked to. He has evidently suddenly fallen in love with her, and is as harassed and happy as any man could desire to be. I wonder what has worked the miracle! Mrs. Lockhart is furious."

PART III

THIS missive, which caused her both amusement and satisfaction, was received by Diana one morning when she, in common with almost every other woman in Tuxedo, was about to start for town. It would seem as if Friday, Saturday and Sunday brought to the notice of careful housewives and mothers every deficiency in domestic comfort or convenience; while the merely frivolous are seized with an ardent desire for activity, either in the matter of "clothes" or amusements, which the arrival of Monday sends them dancing off to gratify.

Mrs. Worthington, the proud possessor of three sets of twins, was going to look for a young governess who should combine all the advantages of a tutor and a trained nurse; Mrs. Gaylord, the owner of the very largest house in the vicinity, was going to

choose a string of pearls for herself and order a marble bath-tub for what she ceremoniously called her "best guest chamber;" and Miss Lee, with the excuse of trying to find a suitable wedding present for a rich friend about to marry an unsuccessful artist, was on her way to content her cockney soul in the noise and bustle of the streets. Why all these ladies, and many more, should have found themselves quite by accident "just in the neighborhood" of Sherry's between one and half-past, and, "rushed" as they declared themselves to be, have spent the better part of an hour and a half at luncheon, is one of the mysteries which attend a feminine day in town.

Diana had seated herself at a table in a corner, and was surveying the crowded room with pleased interest as she slowly drew off her gloves, when she was suddenly enveloped in a cloud of perfume, surrounded by a rustling of silk and encircled by a soft arm, while an enthusiastic voice exclaimed:

"Diana, my dear! You're just the person I wanted to see. May I luncheon with you? I like the verb 'to luncheon.' Say you're glad to see me. Do you know you haven't seen me for three months? 'Father, the black abysses of my heart I will lay bare before you. I confess the blow was *mine*—I stabbed him.' I don't know whether I'll confess to you or not, Diana. But I believe I will, for you always give me such good advice. Darling, I think I'm in love."

Uttering this tender sentiment without taking the trouble to lower her voice in the least, Mrs. Dangerfield sank into a chair opposite her friend, and observed with amiable surprise that everybody was staring at her.

"I don't wonder," answered Miss Lee, half-laughing and half-provoked. "You aren't exactly inconspicuous, you know, and when you talk like that, at the top of your lungs——"

"Oh, do you think any one heard me? Say you don't, Diana. Not that it makes much difference. I don't know any of the people near us."

"But they may know you."

"Oh, never mind. I wish I were an actress," responded Mrs. Dangerfield, with apparent irrelevance, swinging the large diamond heart at the end of her long, jewel-strung chain to and fro over the table.

"Why? That even more people might know you?"

"My dear, I'd love it. And I am sure I'd do it well. All the people I've studied with say so. I've got rather a good figure for it, too, don't you think? And then, the life is so interesting, and one is so free——"

"You are not much trammelled," put in Diana, helping herself to macaroni. "What are you going to eat?"

"Nothing but red meat, and perhaps a little salad—I'm trying to keep thin, you know. *He* says I'm perfect as I am now, and I don't want to change. I never used to care what people thought, as long as I was satisfied with myself, did I, Diana? But, you see, I was getting a double chin, and he wouldn't have liked it."

Mrs. Sentinel's story about banting and the emerald collar flashed into Diana's remembrance at once.

"I suppose I need not ask who 'he' is," she said, coldly.

"No, darling, I don't suppose you need," returned Mrs. Dangerfield, joyously. "He makes no secret of the fact that he admires me. He says he never cared—but I mean *really* cared, Diana—for any two women, but——"

"His mother and you."

"How did you know?"

"It's as old as Adam."

"I never heard that Adam had a mother."

"Well, he would certainly have said it if he had."

"You shatter all my illusions," sighed Mrs. Dangerfield, tranquilly, tweaking out the ends of the voluminous tulle bow under her round, white chin, and patting the lace frills that quivered over the fine curve of her bust. "How do you like my frock? Do say you admire it. Cutpurse made it for me after my own idea. I haven't paid her for two years. Isn't it awful? But, Diana dear, don't tell me that

Haldaine doesn't adore me, because I know he does. You don't suppose he says that kind of thing to every one?"

"I am sure he has said it fifty times."

"Well, he must mean it *one* of those times, and I don't see why this shouldn't be the time. Oh, my dear, if you know how delightfully he made love——"

"Florence!"

"Don't look so shocked, darling. I keep him in order, I can tell you. He says I'm an icicle. Do you think I'm an icicle?"

"An iceberg, if you are ice at all," returned Diana, smiling in spite of herself, "a large, overpowering, glittering mass of danger to the unwary—which, by the way, I don't think Mr. Haldaine is."

Mrs. Dangerfield pouted her red lips, and frankly stared at herself in the two long strips of looking-glass which filled the corner space between the windows where they sat. She was tall, handsome and pleasing, in spite of having too splendid a figure for so young a woman, too much hair for her head, too much face for her features, too much manner for most occasions, and too much laziness, carelessness and mischief in her composition for even Diana to be sure of always coping with successfully.

"Then you don't think he's in any danger?" she said, plaintively, after she had sufficiently observed herself, straightened a patch meant to emphasize a dimple, and pulled her hat a thought more over her face. "I don't like that idea at all, Diana."

"In no more danger than you are."

"But I tell you I'm in *love*. I really am."

"Of course you are—as you always have been—with yourself."

"No, no, darling—with him."

"Nonsense!"

"I am seriously considering a divorce from Richard."

"So I heard; because he had a face like a sheep."

"Oh," exclaimed Mrs. Dangerfield, indignantly, opening her long, amber-

colored eyes to their fullest extent, "what an outrage!"

"I am so glad you are angry. But you know how people talk."

"And I never meant any one to suspect it till it was all over," cried the justly aggrieved lady. "It's so stupid to have a thing like that happen after everybody has been expecting it. Besides, Richard hasn't a face like a sheep! I never should have married him if he had. Now, Diana, I ask you, *do* I look like a woman who would marry a sheep-faced man?"

"You look like a woman who ought to have married a man who could beat her," answered Miss Lee, exasperated, but amused.

"I dare say it would be quite as thinning as massage," remarked Mrs. Dangerfield, reflectively, "and not so expensive. My dear, you've no idea how much of my money goes into the pocket of that Mary Bates—she rubs all the opera singers, you know—but she does tell me the most delightful stories. I'll give you an imitation of the way she talks——"

"Not here, Florence," interrupted Diana; for Mrs. Dangerfield's imitations, while admirably true to nature, were apt to collect the attention of a wondering, if delighted, crowd. "Much as I appreciate your powers as an actress, I really cannot enjoy them in public."

But Mrs. Dangerfield had already begun in a high, nasal key, a monologue, the diverting character of which almost excused the boldness of the performance. Fortunately, the tables near them were now empty.

"What were we talking of before, my dear?" she said, when she had finished. "I know I had something I wanted to say to you. Oh, I remember. About divorce. Richard and I are really perfectly indifferent to each other. He cares only about horses, and I care only about—well, never mind. Why should we stay together?"

"Why shouldn't you—particularly if it's no worse than that?"

"Because I'm in love with Morton Haldaine."

"And if you married him you'd soon be indifferent to him, and very likely want to go back to Richard—who wouldn't have you."

"Do you think he wouldn't? I've a good mind to try."

"Really, Florence, you are too foolish to argue with."

"No; but, Diana dear, do listen. I really want your advice. I'm miserable—I truly am. What would you do?"

"I'd go abroad."

"That's what Richard wants me to do."

"Which, of course, puts an end to the plan. I wonder he'd trust you alone."

"Oh, he'd go, too. He says he wants to hunt at Pau this Winter."

"How self-sacrificing of him!"

"Diana, you talk as if he didn't like me!"

"You said yourself he was indifferent to you."

"No, I didn't; I said we were perfectly indifferent to each other—which is not at all the same thing! But I'll tell you who he's not perfectly indifferent to—and that's Haldaine. He hates him, my dear. Oh, but how he hates him!"

"Because of you?"

"Not a bit. He knows I've got to amuse myself with somebody, and if it wasn't Morton it would be some one else. No, he says he ruined one of our best horses the last time he stayed with us, and that's a thing Richard never could forgive."

"Naturally," said Diana.

"So, you see, it makes it very awkward having him so much about—I mean Richard—glowering. You know how he glowers, don't you, Diana? And every time Morton gives me a new present I'm so afraid Dick will ask me where it came from that I've no pleasure in wearing it. Oh, I didn't mean to tell you that!"

"Do you let him give you things to wear?" asked Diana. "You know, really, that kind of thing is vulgar, Florence——"

"Why, darling, he's known me

since I was a little girl," murmured Mrs. Dangerfield, abstractedly, gazing out of the window after a passing hat that had taken her fancy.

"That's the excuse you used to make for General McLane's presents," said Miss Lee, impatiently. "Your wits are wool-gathering."

"So it is," cried Mrs. Dangerfield, with a delighted chuckle. "I really am amusing, am I not, Diana? I should have said they're only little things, and his feelings are so hurt when I refuse." She twirled the diamond locket about on the end of the jeweled chain, and Diana, seeing that she was expected to ask where it came from, obstinately declined to notice it.

"Only little things to *him*, you know," Mrs. Dangerfield went on, as Miss Lee still kept silent, "and he likes so to give them. I forgot to write and thank him for this. I think I'll telegraph—or, no, I'll telephone. I promised I'd let him know the next time I came to town. Sit still, darling; promise me you won't go, and I'll be back in a minute."

She rustled out of her chair, and undulated down the room, in and out among the tables, artlessly enjoying the attention she excited, moving her head about on her long neck like a swan.

Presently, she returned, flushed and radiant with mischief.

"My dear," she cried, "he's leaving his office this minute; and I do hope the telephone operator's discreet, for really the things he says! And we're going to meet his automobile at the entrance to the Park, and go off somewhere for tea, and—then he'll take me to the train, and—don't scold me, Diana, for truly I couldn't help it—I asked him to come down and dine and spend the night."

Diana shrugged her shoulders.

"I think you are very foolish," she answered, "but I've nothing to say. I leave that to Richard."

"Richard won't be there. He's gone to Hempstead to buy another hunter."

"Florence! I really believe you are out of your senses!"

"So, you see, dear, I said you and I were to be alone in the country to-night, and we'd like somebody to come and cheer us up."

"I hope you don't imagine that I am going to Westchester to-night, trunkless, for the pleasure of chaperoning you and Mr. Haldaine! Upon my word, Florence, you are beyond belief!"

But beyond belief or not, this, it appeared, was just what Florence did imagine, and she had an answer for every objection.

Why should she be bored when she could so easily be amused? There surely wasn't any harm in having Haldaine to stay, as he'd often stayed before, when Diana was there? Diana *had* promised to come and pay her a visit early in September. She must have some things in the town house; she could quite well pack a bag for the night, and telegraph to Tuxedo for her trunk to follow her. This was the first favor Mrs. Dangerfield had asked her for a long time. Oh, very well, if she wouldn't come like that, she supposed she'd tell Morton he'd have to go back after dinner. She really did not see why he shouldn't *dine* with her. Oh, yes, she quite saw Diana's point of view, but really, darling, she sometimes felt that life was too short to spend in bothering about what other people thought, especially when you were in love. There was nothing in the world like love—nothing so delightful as having a man—such a prominent man as Haldaine—crazy about you. Diana knew, of course! It had often been said what an excellent line of men *she* had had attentive to her. Good-bye. She really thought she'd go out all the way in the automobile, since Diana wouldn't meet her at the train. Sensible! Of course she'd be sensible—she didn't know what Diana meant.

All this was delivered without the least lowering of her rather penetrating voice, and accompanied by many soft chuckles and a great deal of arranging

of her friend's costume, the trimming of which she was patting, pulling, or plaiting into shape all the time she talked.

Finding Miss Lee still obdurate, she gave her a perfectly good-natured, affectionate and overpowering embrace, and departed, gathering the looks of all eyes, so that one knew which way she had passed by the turning of heads in that direction. She packed herself and her large hat, her trailing frills, flounces and furbelows, her glittering diamond heart, gold purse, jeweled chain, and long, green, parrot-handled parasol into a hansom, deposited her little scarlet leather hand-bag—containing samples, handkerchiefs, a glass, a smelling-bottle, a powder-puff and a stick of French lip-salve—on the seat beside her, and was driven away, waving her hand.

Diana, feeling somewhat feeble after the encounter, also went her way, chose her wedding present and was just leaving the bewildering counters where everything she fancied seemed more than she could afford, and everything she could afford what no one could fancy, when she was aware of a small, neat, wiry, well-dressed male silhouette entering the door, and found herself face to face with Mr. Richard Dangerfield, who had stopped, he said, to have his watch put in order.

"It's the most annoying thing in the world," he assured her, gravely, "when your watch goes wrong. I missed my train by exactly two minutes."

Diana politely expressed a befitting sorrow.

"But it turned out a blessing in disguise," continued Mr. Dangerfield, "for I met a man who told me that the horse I was after was no good, touched in the wind and stiff in the shoulder. So I telegraphed them at the club that I wouldn't be down. Now, I suppose I must telephone to Florence that I'm coming home to-night. She doesn't expect me."

Diana reflected for an instant at lightning speed. She liked Dick Dangerfield, and she was fond, in a way, of his great, mischievous, irresponsible,

childish, handsome wife. It seemed a pity that the situation should be any more strained between them, as it certainly might be, if he, returning unlooked for, should find Haldaine dining with her.

"Florence is in town," she said, rather slowly, to give herself time to think. "I lunched with her at Sherry's. She wants me to go back with her this evening and spend a few days."

"I hope you are coming," said Mr. Dangerfield, cordially, as he disembarrassed himself of his untrustworthy timepiece.

"Well, I haven't prepared for any such sudden flitting, but I am going to my house to collect a few necessities for the night, and I shall telegraph to my mother to send me a trunk, and not expect me home till she sees me. Poor dear, she hates these hasty plans, but when Florence insists it is difficult to refuse."

Mr. Dangerfield grinned. "I have to do it once in a while, all the same," he observed. "Take my hansom—do. He's got a bully little horse—whisk you up to your house and back in no time! I don't need him any more, truly. I'll meet you at the station at—let me see—you'll have your ticket to get, and a bag to check—we'll say five-twenty. Be sure to send for your habit. Awfully glad you're coming."

And so it came to pass that Miss Lee found herself committed of her own free will to a task she had indignantly refused only a few hours before—that of chaperoning Mrs. Dangerfield.

She had puzzled a great deal over how she was to prepare that vagabond lady for her coming. It would be exceedingly awkward if Florence, taken by surprise, let any remark about a previous refusal escape her. Heaven only knew where she was on the road at present. Diana and Mr. Dangerfield were likely to arrive at the house before she did. The fact that she had gone out with Mr. Haldaine must be explained, but the fact that she had so gone, believing Miss Lee to be on her way to Tuxedo, must on no account become evident. Telegraph and tele-

phone were alike useless, and Diana was at her wits' end when she got out of her cab at the station. She was a moment or two behind the time appointed by the exact Richard, and she was just wishing to herself with some amusement that he might, for the second time that day, miss his train and give her a chance to look about her a little, when she beheld a tall female figure in a large hat, furbelowed gown, and glancing jewels, accompanied by a taller male figure in beautifully cut blue serge, carrying a most incongruous scarlet satchel and green parasol, emerge from the nearest chemist's shop, and languidly stroll across the street, arresting traffic.

Assured of their identity, Diana pounced upon them, and, drawing Mrs. Dangerfield aside, hastily explained the present condition of affairs.

"Ah, now I do call that tiresome!" exclaimed the lady, stopping short in the doorway, to the great inconvenience of the hurrying crowd behind her. "Not your coming, darling—you are an angel, I always knew you were an angel!—but about Richard. Why *does* he want to come home?"

"I told you, Florence," began her friend, patiently.

"Oh, yes, I know! But I ask you, Diana, isn't it tiresome? Morton, did you ever hear anything more annoying?"

It being quite impossible for Haldaine to express open annoyance at the return of the gentleman whose wife's guest he was to be, he only stroked his little black beard, pulled his mustache ends, looked quizzically at Diana with his wonderful blue eyes as who should say, "Fools stand in slippery places," and remarked with perfect propriety that he was sorry Mr. Dangerfield had not found a horse to suit him.

"I did not see how I was going to let *you* know I'd changed my mind, Florence," said Miss Lee, in the pause that followed. "I thought you were off in the automobile. Finding you here was great good luck."

And if she did not say for whom, she looked it.

"We broke down, my dear, so we came back to take the five-o'clock train, and of course we missed it, so I went to the chemist's to get a lemon phosphate—don't you perfectly adore them? Oh, here's Richard. Now, what shall I say? Quick, Diana! Shall I tell him I asked Haldaine for *you*? He'll *have* to stay then to keep up appearances. I think I will!"

"On your own head be it if you do," returned Miss Lee, disengaging herself from the intimate clasp of her friend's hand on her arm.

"I'm not afraid, darling. Your own affairs are too interesting for you to care at all to interfere with mine. Were they satisfactory to-day? Don't blush, dear." And Mrs. Dangerfield laughed her chuckling laugh, and went to meet her husband.

Diana and Haldaine were left standing face to face.

"*Are* you blushing, Miss Lee?" he asked, moving nearer. Then, as he followed Mrs. Dangerfield with a glance half-amused and half-admiring, "Isn't she splendid?" he continued, "so handsome and devil-may-care and good-tempered! I adore her."

"You have an odd way of showing it."

"No, but I do, really. I'm crazy about her—I never met any one in the least like her. I'd do anything for her."

"Then I wish—" she began, and stopped short.

"What do you wish, Miss Lee? Please tell me."

"—that you'd make your attentions less conspicuous," said Diana, smiling.

"But that's what she likes. You know she wouldn't give a fig for me if I worshiped her in secret."

"I don't want her to give a fig for you," said Diana, boldly.

"You think I'm not worth it? Ah, Miss Lee, if I could only persuade you to devote some study to the finer sides of my character! But don't be troubled. She *wouldn't* give a fig for me—if she wanted the fig."

At this, Miss Lee, who had been gazing at the floor, at the moving crowd, into space, anywhere rather than at her companion, suddenly looked up at him with a most curious, tender expression in her gray, dove's eyes, and said softly, but with unmistakable feeling:

"But is it justifiable that such a man as you—for in your way you *are* a great man, I know—should fritter away the best that is in you before you meet the woman—as you will some day—who would give the earth and all the fullness thereof for your sake? To me, watching you, it seems so pitiful."

She moved away toward the now-advancing Dangerfields, leaving Haldaine transfixed with astonishment. But, as he stood, looking after her as he had looked after the "splendid" lady a few minutes before, a queer smile quivered under the hand that still pulled his mustache, and in his mind was the sentence, "She *is*. Or she means me to think so! Hanged if I know which!"

The journey in the train was unremarkable save for the continued conversation of Mrs. Dangerfield, who gave them the items of her last dry-goods' bill and a lifelike representation of an interview with her particular "sales-lady" and the floor-walker, which held the whole car entranced. She then demanded her red satchel, and, abstracting the powder-puff, artlessly powdered her nose, which, she declared, felt hot; after this, she subsided behind the pages of an evening paper, to the infinite relief of Diana. Mr. Dangerfield appeared quite unmoved by any of his wife's antics, a fact which Miss Lee did not fail to note for future use.

"I'm afraid you are only too right about Richard, Florence," she said, gravely, as they sat together in the pink-and-white drawing-room after dinner, surrounded by countless vases filled with early Autumn flowers, and innumerable photograph-frames containing late Summer friends. "He *must* be as indifferent to you as you are

to him, for he neither seemed to object in the least to the presence of Mr. Haldaine, nor did he turn a hair when you were talking—that is, entertaining an audience of fellow-citizens in the car."

"You're so insulting, darling," returned Mrs. Dangerfield, disposing the folds of her shimmering train gracefully about her long, lazy limbs as she stretched herself on the sofa. "Doesn't a day in town tire you? I'm nearly dead! Richard's all right. He ought to be used to my ways by this time, though sometimes he pretends not to be, and I told you I was going to introduce Morton in a new light, as an admirer of yours," she giggled, delightedly, "as well as a friend of mine. He was quite interested."

"Do you suppose, if he'd cared an atom, he would have believed you?"

Mrs. Dangerfield sat up and yawned.

"I don't care if he cares an atom or not," she said; and, to make her defiance more marked, she presently removed Diana's "admirer" to the piazza, where by the light of the stars and their own, hard, handsome eyes, they remained in leafy seclusion till nearly midnight, when the emotional nature of the conversation forced Florence reluctantly to transport her icicle presence to a place which, though warmer in atmosphere, was less likely to witness any melting on her part.

"You know I hate you in those crazy moods," she observed, blinking her eyes a great deal as she faced the light.

"No, you don't," said Haldaine, rather brutally. "You like it. Most women do. What on earth have you been doing all this evening but trying to put me in just that mood? And then when you succeed, you pretend to be shocked and frightened."

"You're so imprudent," complained the lady.

"You're so maddening," whispered the gentleman.

This was a word which Florence considered admirably descriptive of her alluring charm and provoking display of it, and she smiled both with her

narrowed eyes and her pointed red mouth, threw back her head, stretched out her beautiful white arms, and, wavering for a moment between the exquisite tenderness of Duse, and the smoldering passion of Bernhardt, exclaimed:

"And do you think *I* put no restraint upon my *own* feelings? Look at me, Morton. Can't you see that I"—dramatic pause—"love you!"

She had not the most remote idea whether she was in earnest or not. She rose to the occasion, with the speech and manner she believed the occasion demanded, recognizing at the same time the discreetness of choosing a place inimical to any further indiscretion.

It was at this precise second that the electric light, introduced with some trouble and expense into Mrs. Dangerfield's pretty, jim-cracky lamps, was suddenly turned off and as suddenly turned on again, while Diana's voice exclaimed from behind the double curtains that separated the hall from the drawing-room:

"Haven't I got the right one yet? I beg your pardon, Mr. Dangerfield, I really am stupid. There! Does that throw more light on the subject?"

Florence's arms dropped at her sides. Haldaine, who had made a quick stride in her direction, stopped short, uttering an expression of equal force and brevity. He caught her hand, pressed it and let it go instantly.

"If you meant what you said—" he muttered.

But she interrupted him with a quick, "Not now," and, raising her voice, directed her usual voluble stream of converse toward the hall.

"What on earth are you two doing? I thought you must have gone upstairs long ago, everything was so quiet. I believe Mr. Haldaine and I must have been half asleep on the piazza, for we'd certainly no idea how late it was. I think I'd like something before I go to bed, but I don't know what. What would you like, Diana, dear?"

She had reached the curtains by this

time, and now thrust her head through them, lifting her train behind her to kick a waggish foot at Haldaine.

"Well, will you please just come here and look at them?" she cried, making room for him to join her.

The hall was hung with blue butcher's linen instead of paper, and against this excellent background Mr. Dangerfield, in his shirt-sleeves on top of a high, spindly step-ladder, was re-hanging a group of sporting prints, while below, Diana, with her satin skirts so tucked up as to display an unusual amount of arched instep, lilac-silk stocking and lace-flounced petticoat, was offering him impartially the hammer, nails, twisted wire and advice.

He did not turn, or, indeed, appear even to notice, the presence of his wife and Haldaine. But Miss Lee, being less occupied and more conciliatory, addressed the two heads.

"We've done over all the pictures in the smoking-room, greatly to their advantage," she announced, "and we thought we'd just change these, too, while we were about it. I love this sort of pottering, only Mr. Dangerfield won't let me have any of the real fun. He's so selfish he keeps all the highest ones for himself. But, never mind! I nearly killed him just now by turning *off* all the lights below, instead of turning *on* the one he needed in the chandelier. He's very meek at present, and is going to give me a handsome testimonial for my services."

"Why, so will I!" cried Mrs. Dangerfield, pinching Haldaine's arm to emphasize the joke to him. "I never saw anything better done. So that's what you've been about all evening? Well, now let's go and have an orgy in the dining-room. I'm quite awake, and very hungry."

And, later, when she attended her guest to her room, she embraced and thanked her warmly for "keeping Richard so nicely amused."

"And, my dear, you can't imagine how—how funny it was, your making that mistake about the light. I'd

just come in from the piazza, and I hadn't an idea there was any one in the hall——"

"So I gathered."

"It *wasn't* a mistake, then?" Mrs. Dangerfield simulated horror.

"Of course not."

"You heard us?"

"I heard *you*, Florence, and, because I did not choose that there should be anything more to hear, I cut the scene short."

"Richard could not hear?"

"Fortunately, not at that moment. Florence, how can you be such a fool?"

"Diana, dear, I really do think I care for that man."

And Mrs. Dangerfield threw herself into an arm-chair, and sighed tragically.

"Don't be an idiot! You care to exercise your talent for acting upon him as an appreciative, responsive, remunerative, good-looking——"

"He *is* awfully good-looking, isn't he, Diana?"

"I said so—rather notorious young man, whose attentions you think other women envy you."

"*Think*, my dear? I know it!" exclaimed Mrs. Dangerfield. "They'd all be crazy to have him where I have him now," and she wiggled a possessive thumb in the air to show how entirely Haldaine was beneath it. "I could have done anything I liked with him this evening."

"I think you'd have had a different story to tell if I had not made my presence known. You *can't* talk to a man that way, and expect him not to take advantage of it."

"Oh, I don't say he isn't difficult to manage. But I hope you do not think——and here she drew herself up in an attitude of grandly offended dignity——"that I'm not capable of managing him."

"He comes too near who comes to be denied,' you know," said Diana.

"You think some day I won't want to deny him? Then, darling, as I think the same myself, you see it *would* be a good plan to get a divorce

from Richard. It's really not difficult, and I'm sure he'd be willing to stay out West, somewhere"—vaguely—"for a little while, to oblige me. You don't know, Diana, how tired I am of this way of living. I'm so bored. Never marry a man who likes *horses*, my dear, for I assure you he can't like anything else."

"I certainly shouldn't think he'd like the kind of life you're leading."

"Why doesn't he object, then? I'm pining for excitement."

"I suppose he really doesn't think it worth while. It seems an odd thing to me, Florence, that you, who are attractive enough in your queer, wild way, should so utterly have failed to keep your husband's affection."

"I could have it back in a very short time if I wanted it," declared Florence, superbly.

"Not in half as short a time as I could take it from you," returned Diana, cheerfully. "Unlace me, like a good girl, won't you? I'm getting sleepy."

Mrs. Dangerfield stared, and then laughed, delightedly.

"Well, as long as I have Morton, you're welcome to Dick, my darling," she said. "But don't you ever talk to me about morals after *that*."

"I won't—after that," promised Diana. "Good night."

"I suppose that's a hint," said Mrs. Dangerfield, getting up slowly, and yawning unrestrainedly as she crossed the room. "I wonder what people would say, my dear, if I *did* get a divorce, and *you* married Richard? I know what *I'd* say."

"What would you say?"

"What all married women say when their property, legitimate or otherwise, deserts them for another lady."

"What's that?"

"*I made the match*," chuckled Mrs. Dangerfield, shutting the door.

Argument with Florence appeared to be useless, and Diana desisted from further remonstrance, but she favored Haldaine with glances of pity and wonder whenever she could be sure that he was observing her, turning her eyes

away with apparent haste and confusion whenever they happened to meet his, addressing him only when politeness made it absolutely necessary, and then with a note of subdued sadness in her voice which could hardly fail to excite his curiosity.

"If you disapprove of me so much, Miss Lee, may I ask why you entirely abandoned Mrs. Dangerfield to my evil company last evening?" he inquired, when they found themselves for a few minutes alone in the hall before luncheon the next morning.

Richard was off in pursuit of another horse, and Florence had insisted upon Haldaine's staying up for the day, declaring that the telephone was quite sufficient for any communication he might have to make to his office.

"Last evening?" echoed Diana. "Oh, I was amusing myself, you see. What a charming, earnest sort of boyishness seems to come out in a nice man when he's doing anything about a house. Somehow, I can't picture you on top of a step-ladder, hanging pictures, Mr. Haldaine."

"Am I to infer from this that you do not find me either charming, earnest, boyish or nice?"

"Not boyish, certainly, nor yet, I fancy, very much in earnest—about many things. I wish, for your own sake, you had less of that curious quality which, for want of a better word, we call 'charm,' and, for my own, that I did not believe you to be nicer than you often appear. If it weren't for that I could despise you comfortably."

"Then you don't despise me—comfortably?"

"No," said Diana, sighing. "I see the good things about you—your strength and decision of character in dealing with men, your business ability, which is well recognized, your generosity, your queer, warped courage—which would lead you to fight anything but your own wishes—your fine intelligence, your ambition——"

"May I ask how you found out all these things to my advantage?"

"By studying your weaknesses with

all my might, expecting to hate you for them."

The surface of Haldaine's self-consciousness began to tingle pleasantly.

"Instead of which," continued Diana, "I can only pity you for all the trouble I see they have already involved, and will continue to involve you in."

"You seem to have made me the subject of some thought," he said, smiling irresistibly, and flashing his brilliant eyes at her.

"I have," she returned, bowing her head with saint-like seriousness.

"And what do you consider my principal weaknesses to be?"

"Vanity and self-indulgence. The vanity is, perhaps, not unnatural, since you are an unusual man and have been, I suppose, unusually flattered by men, women and events; but how much bigger a person you would be without the evidences of it. The self-indulgence may lead—but I have no right to speak to you in this way! What difference can it make to me how madly you are in love, how you spoil your own life, so long as you make *hers* happy?"

The last few words reached Haldaine only in a whisper as Miss Lee turned and glided swiftly away from him.

The sensations she had roused were by no means unpleasant, though her reference to Mrs. Dangerfield was somewhat disquieting. He admired Florence immensely, of course. There was no question that, as far as she would go, under the rose, he would follow. This he conceived to be one of the duties, as well as pleasures, of so finished a man of the world as himself. She understood perfectly—naturally, she understood—the sort of game they were playing. But in the light of what Miss Lee had said, or, rather, implied, he seemed to see himself tied as a tail to the tremendous swooping of Florence as a kite, soaring and bounding through the startled social atmosphere in a way it made him giddy to think of. She was wonderfully handsome, amusing, absorbing, provoking, maddening to any man to be with and *not* make love to; but somehow, when

it came to "making her life happy"—which had a sort of tender, domestic sound—he rather doubted if any one could do *that* successfully.

"I hope that girl isn't under the impression that I want to be in Richard's place," he said to himself; and the thought sent a cold chill down his back.

In regard to her impressions of himself, it was really remarkable how accurately she had arrived at the best of his own conclusions. It only showed how little you guessed your neighbor's sentiments toward you. He had been inclined to set her down as indifferent, when not absolutely disagreeable in her feelings about him, and all the time she had been analyzing him in this intimate, not to say masterly, way—even the little cold prickles of her censure only whipped up the warm blood of his self-esteem. The concern she so evidently exhibited far more than compensated for her adverse criticism. Hang it all, every man had faults, and if she had managed to put her finger on his, how gently, how reluctantly she had done it! The attitude of reproving angel became a woman, as the appearance of not entirely irreclaimable recklessness befitted a man. If he had met with reproving angels earlier in his career, doubtless there would have been less in that career to reprove. Still, a man must have experiences—or how shall he know the worth of angels?

The announcement of luncheon brought happily to his remembrance the fact that sinners must be fed, as well as admonished, and he partook of that meal with a good appetite and a pleasant confusion of interest in the two ladies who bore him company. But if he expected any further attention from Miss Lee, he was disappointed, for she removed herself directly and somewhat ostentatiously when they left the dining-room—quite as if he and Mrs. Dangerfield were newly-engaged lovers, he thought, with some uneasiness—and did not reappear until the hour of afternoon tea suggested the possible return of horse-hunting husbands. Somehow, her be-

havior, manifesting, as it did, a tacit acceptance of the inevitableness of their relation, threw an almost domestic gloom over the hours they spent together. Never had Florence appeared so inconsequent to Haldaine, and never had Haldaine appeared so dull to Florence. They hailed the arrival of Diana in her soft, rose-colored tea-gown, and Richard in his boots and breeches, as noted actors might hail the arrival of a tardy "house."

But Mr. Dangerfield had found a paragon in horseflesh—too light to carry his present owner—in a certain New Jersey stable, and, having been asked a heavy price for the animal, wished to describe its every perfection to the only person who would congenially listen to him, and he finally carried Miss Lee off to the library to verify an assertion he had made in regard to its pedigree.

Half an hour later, Mrs. Dangerfield, yawning in a chromatic scale of weariness, paused at her friend's door and found her examining a charming pink topaz belt-buckle set with tiny diamonds.

"Where did you get that, darling?" she inquired. "Dear me! I'm very bored! Morton has been as dull as ditch-water all day. You must really help me to thwart him a little this evening, Diana. You know about these things. Wouldn't it be good for him? No, but that's really lovely! Who gave it to you? Don't tell me, if you'd rather not."

"I haven't the least objection," returned Diana. "Your husband did."

"Did he?" said Mrs. Dangerfield. "I thought *you* said it was vulgar to let men give you things to wear, my dear? I don't know that I like that!"

"Oh, it evidently gave him so much pleasure to choose it for me that I really hadn't the heart to be prudish; and, besides, I've known him almost ever since I was a little girl," murmured Miss Lee, with apparent unconsciousness. "It *is* awfully pretty, isn't it?"

"That was for hanging the pictures,

I suppose. Well, my dear, I really advise you to seek some further employment of the same sort this evening. It pays, doesn't it?" and she chuckled, appreciatively.

"But I thought you wanted my assistance with Mr. Haldaine? Not that it is necessary, for he adores the ground you walk on—I'm afraid I must admit that—and I shouldn't think you'd care to make him any more miserable. Still, if I can help you, now that I know it is not a mere flirtation, but something *serious* that has come into both your lives—something *dignified* and *final*—I will."

"Good gracious, my dear, you make me feel as if I were being married over again. You give me the shivers!" exclaimed Florence, wriggling her plump shoulders. "I think, after all, I can look after Morton myself, thank you; only, we need not split up quite as we did last night."

In obedience to this hint, Diana contrived to convey the not unwilling Haldaine to the garden after dinner, where, it being a warm night, she kept him sitting on a rustic bench in the soft, shrub-scented darkness for an hour, while she talked to him about his soul and his higher nature. He was immensely edified and full of conflicting emotions when she had finished.

It seemed to him that when goodness aroused such exaltation of mood it was hardly worth while to tamper with temptation, which, however, he speedily found himself constrained to do when he joined Mrs. Dangerfield, later, on the piazza.

Diana told her friend that evening that one of the things most to be respected about her "Morton" was the severity with which he would undoubtedly visit any flirtatiousness on the part of the lady who should become his wife.

"I've discovered that his high moral sense in regard to anybody belonging to him is only to be equaled by his insane jealousy," she declared. "And I'm very glad of it, for your sake, dear Florence, for if ever any woman

needed a firm hand over her, it's you. That's where Richard—who is the nicest, most easy-going man on earth—failed."

Florence made a face, pulled a long curl down to the very tip of her nose, let it spring up again, snatched a bunch of red chrysanthemums from a vase on the dressing-table, thrust it into her hair behind one ear, *à la* Carmen, and went out of the room singing roguishly—and somewhat out of tune—"*L'Amour est enfant de Bohème*."

The next day Haldaine went off early to town, and Diana spent the morning sounding the praises of his more rigorous qualities to Mrs. Dangerfield, complimenting her upon her perspicacity in having seen from the first what singular hardness of character and decision of purpose lay under his seemingly lax frivolity, and entreating her to waste no time in making the state of their affections known to her husband, till Florence begged, rather irritably, that she might be allowed to choose her own way of managing her own affairs, and even hinted that her friend's disinterestedness might not be beyond question.

"And in spite of your fascinations," she added, maliciously, "Richard is still extremely anxious to take his wife abroad. He said so again last night."

At this, Miss Lee appeared to be only more wounded than insulted, and had to have her pardon begged many times and be generally petted and cajoled before she could consent to see that it was only a joke, and that she would seriously inconvenience everybody if she refused to take her promised afternoon's ride with her host.

Once off, however, she did not think it necessary to return until within a few minutes of the dinner-hour, and kept Florence, who had the reputation of being later for everything than anybody else in the world, waiting a good half-hour in the drawing-room.

The usual careless good-nature of Mrs. Dangerfield's manner was dashed with a slight haughtiness toward her friend that evening, and she revenged herself on some person or persons un-

known by flirting with Haldaine to such an outrageous extent that he felt himself goaded into assuring her that it must be all or nothing from this time forward, for he declined to be made a fool of any longer. Perhaps he hoped to bolster up his own prudence by alarming hers.

Whatever he meant, she recounted his words with perfect candor and calousness to Diana the next day, who began for the first time to wonder if the situation were not really more desperate than she had imagined. She did not believe for one moment that Florence was in love with the man, but she might persuade herself that she was. In her craze for excitement, for adventure, for what she was pleased to call "living her life," she was but too likely to get herself into some position from which nobody could extricate her with a shred of reputation. As for Haldaine, Diana could only suppose that he had resolved for the moment to disregard his "higher nature" and, what was more remarkable, the warnings of worldly wisdom, and was minded to go on with the game as long as the lady offered him surprises.

"It would serve them both right if they had to run away with each other," she said to herself. "I can't imagine a fitter punishment for either, and Florence is just mad enough to think it dramatic, though I did not believe he was the sort of man to commit himself in that way. If Dick ever looked beyond a horse's feet, or above its ears, one might go to him for help; but, as it is, I must manage these fools myself."

But just what she was to do with them she did not know. Her endeavors to awaken in Florence jealousy of her husband, and in Haldaine a wholesome fear of romantic obligations, had apparently been of little avail.

"I have a telegram from Morton, saying that he's detained, and can't be back in time for dinner," said Mrs. Dangerfield, coming into Diana's room about half-past six o'clock; "so, darling, you and Richard will have to

go to the Thompsons' without me. I know how one feels in the country when a man gives out and one has an extra woman on one's hands. I wish we'd never promised to dine with them, but that can't be helped now."

"I should think you'd much better go with Richard and leave me at home, where I'd far rather be, for I'm really done up. My long rides have tired me."

"Oh, my dear, it's you they want, and I've *such* a headache! I give you my word, I can hardly see," responded Florence, looking uncommonly brilliant, and picking up Diana's hand-glass to survey the curls at the back of her neck. "How do you like my hair this way?"

"Very much. I'm sorry you have a headache."

"Not as sorry as I am. I feel as if I were going to die. I really do. I think I'll go and lie down. 'To die—to sleep—to sleep, perchance to dream'—"

"You've left your handkerchief and your telegram on the dressing-table," observed Diana, prosaically.

"Why, so I have!" cried Mrs. Dangerfield, returning in some haste, and beginning, with a fine air of unconsciousness, to fold and pinch the yellow paper between her fingers, finally tearing it into a dozen pieces and dropping them carelessly into the waste-paper basket. "You will come in and see me by-and-bye, won't you, dear?"

"Certainly," said Diana, "as soon as I am dressed. I suppose I'd better begin pretty soon, too, for I take a good hour, and it's something of a drive. Dear me, I wish I were at home again."

As she followed Florence to the door, which that erratic lady had a habit of leaving open behind her, a scrap of the torn telegram—fallen on the floor instead of into the basket—caught her eye.

"—ack by eight-thir—"

Of course, he meant to dine alone with Florence. That she had suspected; but how to prevent it?

She cogitated for a few minutes, and

then rang for the housemaid who was in the habit of attending her. To that worthy young woman's surprise Miss Lee was taken so faint in the midst of dressing that she was twice obliged to lie down on the sofa, and finally gave up the attempt altogether, undressed and went to bed.

A pleading message brought Mrs. Dangerfield, indignant with forced commiseration, to her side.

Diana was awfully sorry. She knew she had rather overdone things lately, she had felt horribly tired when she came back from her ride yesterday, and again to-day. She ought to have said so, but hated to seem selfish when Florence had a headache, etc.

The end she had, of course, foreseen. Not to make her desire to stay at home too apparent, Mrs. Dangerfield was obliged to finish a rather more elaborate toilette than her violent complaints of pain could justify the beginning of, and agree to depart in company with her husband for the Thompsons'.

"But I shall steal away directly after dinner," she declared. "Dick can come home later with—with anybody who'll bring him. You'll just have a cup of soup, dear? Or what will you have? Jane will look after you. Be sure to take good care of Miss Lee, Jane. And I'll be back before ten."

"You're very good, dear, but I shall be asleep before then, I hope," said Diana.

Mrs. Dangerfield bent down as if to kiss her suffering friend.

"Morton won't, though, darling," she whispered, laughing. "You didn't suppose I was coming home early for you—though, of course, I would, if you needed me, my angel. We were going to have had *such* a nice little dinner together. My dear, he'll be furious! But I dare say it's safer as it is, and looks more natural, don't you think? And I'll be back in plenty of time to tell him whether it's to be 'all or nothing.' I really suppose it had better be nothing, don't you, Diana?" And Mrs. Dangerfield, who had not the faintest intention of letting it come to either

issue, affected an air of great prudence. "Since you called my attention to it, I fancy he *would* be rather exacting as a husband. And at least Dick isn't *that*. What do you think?"

"I entirely agree with you," said Diana, a shade too heartily.

"Well, I can't tell. I have not *quite* made up my mind. It's a good deal to put out of one's life," remarked Mrs. Dangerfield, glancing round the room to make sure that Jane had left it, "for he's so devoted to me, and he'll be so disappointed. After all, dear, I suppose a great passion is worth a great sacrifice. And I really can't live without excitement—and he's so good-looking—don't you know he's good-looking, Diana? I don't know how I shall tell him. Couldn't you manage to come down and interrupt us—if you feel better, I mean? Oh, I don't know *what* to do! I'll wait till the time comes, and see. Isn't it thrilling! There's Richard, calling me. Good-bye. I think perhaps I'd better go abroad—dragged unwillingly, you see. Dick would like to go on Saturday. And then we could begin all over again when I get home!" With which last virtuous burst of confidence, Mrs. Dangerfield departed.

Diana stifled the pangs of a naturally healthy appetite with soup and dry toast, and, when the tray containing the remains of this insufficient repast had been removed, she got up and began to dress, slowly, for she had no wish to interrupt Haldaine's solitary and probably none-too-amiably-digested dinner. The lady in the case seemed, after all, in a more promising state of mind than she had feared, but what about the gentleman?

He was just lighting a cigar in the hall as she came down-stairs, leaning heavily on the baluster, and looking as feeble as she knew how.

"I was told you were ill, Miss Lee," he said, glancing up, at the sound of her steps. "I hope you are better."

He did not look displeased to see her, Diana thought.

"Yes, thank you," she replied, gently, "a little better. I came down

to see if the evening mail had arrived. Has it?"

"I think not. Won't you sit here with me a little while and wait for it? Does my smoking bother you?"

"Not at all."

He placed a chair for her, and arranged the cushions.

She thanked him. He assured her that he was an excellent nurse, and then, as silence seemed about to settle between them, he broke out abruptly:

"Have you given me up as a bad job, Miss Lee?"

"No," said Diana, "but I cannot influence you in regard to the disposition you are about to make of your life, and I infinitely dread the result of it for— for both of you."

"Disposition of his life"! With a result "infinitely to be dreaded"!

Haldaine experienced a slight tightening of the heart and a distinct sensation of revolt against her employment of the word "both."

"I haven't the least idea what you are talking about."

"I beg your pardon. These are matters upon which I've no business to touch."

"On the contrary, I particularly request you to be more open."

"Then," said Diana, leaning forward and speaking earnestly, "let me entreat you, dear Mr. Haldaine, since the time to pause has gone past, since you have decided that your love for each other is stronger than anything else in your lives—be good to her always. Don't let her guess it if you ever find that her inability to understand the deeper sides of your character throws you back upon yourself. Don't ever be less appreciative of her conspicuous talents, her charming, gay frivolity, her artless desire to attract, her universal exercise of her power, than you are now. Men are so apt to deprecate in their own wives what they have found most delightful in other people's."

She sighed profoundly as she finished, and Haldaine felt the hair rise on his head.

"But, my dear Miss Lee, my dear

woman, you take this thing much too seriously!" he pleaded. "Nothing is decided. There is nothing to decide. We are the best of friends. We understand each other perfectly. I admire Mrs.—the lady—extravagantly, and she permits herself to be admired——"

"Extravagantly," finished Diana, in her head.

"I am devoted to her, heart and soul," pursued the gentleman. "Imprudently so, perhaps—but, then, you can hardly fail to admit her attraction, which might well carry a man off his feet. As far as she is concerned, she—she tolerates me, of course——"

"You do her injustice," exclaimed Miss Lee.

"Well, I will flatter myself by saying that I hope she is even fond of me, in a way."

"I hope so, too," said Diana, with indignation.

"But there's nothing more in it, believe me! *Don't* you believe me?" as she allowed him to perceive a look of incredulity in her eyes.

"No, but I understand you," she said, gravely. "You are doing quite right to withhold your confidence, but it is useless. I guessed, when I knew that *you* had avoided the dinner-party, and that *she*, finding herself obliged to go in my place, had arranged to return early—I guessed at once what it meant. You have persuaded her to run away with you."

"Upon my honor!" exclaimed Haldaine, with energy, "no such idea ever crossed my mind. And nothing is further from hers, I'll wager."

Diana allowed her face to become suffused with surprise during his first statement, and with doubt during his second.

"Can I have mistaken Florence?" he heard her murmur to herself.

This was agonizing. "Miss Lee," he began, vehemently, "you don't for one moment suppose that *she* is under any such impression? You *can't* mean that!"

But what Diana could mean, she was unable just then to explain, for at this moment the butler arrived with

the evening mail, beautifully assorted on a salver, one side of which he gracefully insinuated into her notice with the soft suggestion, "Your letters, please, miss," murmured below his breath.

Haldaine, cursing the interruption, jumped up and flung across to the half-open door, where he stood staring into the night. He had been a bit shaken. To attribute such madly romantic notions to Florence was preposterous! And yet—

Miss Lee, glancing over her shoulder at his back, hurriedly tore open an envelope directed in a hand well known to her, read the few lines of the letter it contained, suppressed an exclamation, started to her feet, and then, sitting down again, remained lost in deep and apparently anxious thought for several minutes, during which she was entirely unaware of the fact that Haldaine had sauntered back and was regarding her with some perturbation.

"Don't take it so to heart," he said, convinced that his affairs still occupied her attention. "You are—you must be mistaken."

She crumpled the letter in her hand, and looked up at him, shaking her head and smiling mechanically.

"How—what—do you mean about to-night?" she stammered.

"What else have we been talking about?" he demanded. "You rather intimated—at least, you seemed to imagine—but rather than that, I'd—"

He modestly hesitated to say what he would rather do, but Diana believed that the gentleman's frame of mind was no less satisfactory than that of the lady. Still, granting that they were sincerely conscious—*apart*—of each other's special disadvantages, and the dangers of the situation—a state of affairs she had exercised all her ingenuity to bring about—would they be equally conscious of these things when they were together?

If Florence retreated first, Haldaine would undoubtedly, and in spite of the fears with which Diana hoped

she had inspired him, be piqued. If, on the other hand, Haldaine was the first to retire—a sufficiently awkward thing for any man to do—Florence, in accordance with feminine nature, would probably advance, and if Florence advanced—well, it was safer not to risk explanations of any sort between them.

But how was she to arrange their rescue, when her mind was distracted by the sudden emergency with which her letter had just brought her face to face?

The faint, far-off sound of a train's whistle came to her through the half-open door—the nine-fifteen down! There would not be another for an hour. She took a sudden resolution. Haldaine should take her to town in the automobile, in which she knew he himself had come up that evening. Moreover, he should make the offer of his own free will, departing in humble gratitude under her protecting wing.

Alarmed by her long silence, her companion now addressed her again.

"You still look troubled," he said, tentatively.

"I have received news which makes it imperative that I should go to town to-night," she answered, glancing down at her letter.

"Bad news?" he inquired, surprised for a moment out of his own anxieties.

"Serious news, but I hope not bad."

"I am very sorry."

"Thank you. I must leave word for Florence," she said, vaguely, looking about as if for writing materials. "I suppose I can't catch anything before the ten-twenty, now. If only the mail had come earlier!"

"Why not use my automobile?" exclaimed Haldaine, earnestly.

"Oh!" she cried out, as if a weight had been lifted, and then, with sudden despair: "But I *can't* take you away—how can I, when so much depends—when I know you are so confidently expected here?"

Haldaine had, to tell the truth, intended to trust the young lady to the guidance of his admirable chauffeur,

but at the word "confidently" he experienced his third or fourth shock that evening, and it dawned upon his mind that if impossible things really were, as Miss Lee hinted, expected of him, this might be a way—

No man, yielding his services to so obvious and natural a demand upon them, could be accused of cowardice, although he might attain safety. But he still craved assurance that flight—for, after all, it was flight—was necessary.

"I see I cannot persuade you to alter your mind as to the exigencies of the situation?" he hazarded.

"Other people repose more confidence in me than you do," she returned, sighing. "If only I might have stayed—if I could persuade——"

She faltered, and turned away.

"Look here, Miss Lee," broke in Haldaine, "this is all nonsense, I give you my word! Let me take you to town. I *insist* upon it. You aren't fit to go alone. No, don't answer. I won't hear another word."

"You really mean it?"

"I never meant anything more sincerely in my life."

She put her hand on his arm. "If you are free to go," she said, "I *have*, perhaps, misunderstood things. Forgive me, and believe that you will never regret this kindness."

"I don't think I shall," he answered, covering the hand affectionately with his own. "Only, tell me one thing—I don't know how to put it, but—but—while not doubting in the least the necessity for your departure, you would not, would you, have gone in *quite* this way if you had consulted simply your own comfort and convenience?"

"No," murmured Miss Lee, looking down in artless confusion.

"You dread the result of the next few hours for some person—for whom you have grown to feel—may I say?—a regard?"

"For the person for whom in all the world I feel the *most* regard," returned Diana, with sudden firmness.

"Thank you," said Haldaine, evidently moved.

He rang the bell to give his orders, and she turned to go up-stairs. On the first step his voice arrested her.

"Did you *really* think so badly of my book?" he inquired, boyishly.

"I bought another copy immediately," she answered, sweetly. "But I'm no better critic than I was before. I'm still prejudiced—only it's entirely in your favor."

"Thank you," said Haldaine again, still more moved, and his eyes followed her ascent with the gratitude of satisfied vanity.

Half an hour later, Mrs. Dangerfield, returning somewhat to her chagrin in the society of her husband—who declared himself also greatly exercised over Miss Lee's illness—found herself in possession of a guestless house and two hurried letters of explanation.

DEAREST FLORENCE:

I had a note from Mr. Appleby this evening, telling me that he was down with what they hope may prove a light case of typhoid, at the Presbyterian Hospital! As you may or may not have suspected, we have been engaged for some years. We mean to be married in October. I am going at once to town to see him. I hope mama will join me to-morrow, so do not let your conventional spirit be shocked. Wishing to help you to avoid the interview you so much dreaded, I have induced Mr. Haldaine to take me in the automobile. It is a great comfort to me, as I unfortunately missed the nine-fifteen; still, I hope you are properly grateful. Give my warmest love to Mr. Dangerfield, and beg him not to go abroad before my wedding.

Yours, as affectionately
as haste will allow,
DIANA LEE.

"Well, I never in all my life! Listen to this, Dick," cried Mrs. Dangerfield, gabbling through such parts of the letter as befitted her husband's ears, and then throwing herself heavily at full length upon the sofa. "That woman is a shameless hussy, no less! I declare, I don't know whether I am relieved or disgusted—at her conduct, I mean."

"She must have been feeling better to have been able to go to town," said the imperturbable Richard. "Didn't Haldaine leave a line?"

"Oh, yes, he left a line, saying how

grieved he is to go—especially as business calls him unexpectedly to Pittsburgh to-morrow. It's a beautiful letter."

"Let me hear it," said Mr. Dangerfield, looking at nothing.

"I'll let you *see* it, some day—when I have it framed," answered his wife. "Richard, I think we *will* go abroad on Saturday. Prudence is a dull virtue, and I feel a sudden longing for Paris."



THE HEART THAT KNOWS

SEE, the cherry blossoms whiten all the way,
 Locusts swing their censers, jonquils glow with light,
 High the plumes of lilac in the south wind sway;
 Roseate as the peach bloom comes the Day from Night.

See the tender oak-leaves, weaving in the sun
 Lace-work of their shadows on the sheep-cropped grass.
 Can there be another when this day is done?
 Hold, O heart, and grasp it—do not let it pass!

Yet, O love, you tell me: "All the days shall shine,
 If we meet them loving; lilac, cherry, rose
 Have a constant message for your heart and mine,
 Have a constant message for the heart that knows.

"To each heart that knows, love, in the kind earth lies
 The force that tints the aster or turns the rose to fire,
 A hidden flame and subtle which never, never dies,
 A changeless flame that burns, love, for the world's desire."

MAURICE FRANCIS EGAN.



HIS INVENTIVE GENIUS

PARKE—Did you get up a good excuse for your wife when you were out the other night?

TOM—Yes. She said it was so good that she almost believed me.



FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD

MRS. HATTERSON—After this, I am going to have my day at home.

MRS. CATTERSON—I suppose you like to have one day all to yourself.

HER CREDITOR

By Emery Pottle

SHE pushed back the green-denim screen with an impatient foot, and, in the increased space before the flickering gas-light, spread out her draperies opulently, and craned her neck to observe the effect in the absurdly inadequate mirror.

"It's perfectly hopeless," she laughed, softly, "hopeless; I shall never know how this skirt hangs. And the bow on the back of it—it's as deep a mystery to me as the law of capillary attraction. This comes of being poor, and living in one room, and pretending that it's nice and funny to hide everything that pertains to one's toilette behind a vicious old green screen. I wish I had a grown-up mirror!"

Rose Page stood smilingly before the despised glass, and critically eyed the tilt of an aigret she had just perched upon the heavy coils of her dark hair.

"I hope the august 'they' will think some one sent me my violets—at a quarter a bunch," she continued, lightly.

Though it would have seemed that Miss Page had accomplished, to the last and most delicate detail, her toilette, yet she continued to bestow upon herself, to the inspiring strains of "Dixie," an engaging series of pats and pulls and pushes. She was an undeniably pretty girl, with her strong, supple body, full of appealing curves and graces, her warm Southern coloring, and slightly irregular features. Her gown was of some thin, white stuff, and about her bodice, lightly touching her slender shoulders, were some bits of rare old lace, fastened with a quaint brooch of pearls and diamonds.

"My first New York party," she went on. "Bless me, I mustn't call it 'party'! I wonder what it will be like. Oh, I hope they'll like me—they're right to: I'm sure I'm a very nice girl; my gown is decent and clean; and then, mother's lace! 'Tisn't necessary they should know, the very first time, that I'm poor as Uncle Pete's mule, and have to earn my living. Just this once, before I get ground down to the old wheel, I'm going to be *grand*—just like a 'real lady.'"

Some one knocked.

"Oh, Mr. Rogers," she cried, flying to the door, "is it the cab? Very well. In a second, tell him.

"The extravagance of me! Cab, new slippers, flowers and gloves—whew! But I don't care, care, care," she sang. "'I'll work all day in the br'ilin' sun,' to make up for it." And, catching up her gloves and wrap and a scarf for her head, she hurried down the stairs.

On the landing she passed Miss Warren, a fellow-lodger in the barn-like studio building where Rose lived. The woman paused, and looked resentfully after the pretty figure that went by with a happy, careless nod.

"You'll get over that soon enough," she murmured. "What right, I'd like to know, have you here taking bread out of my mouth, anyway?" And she went wearily on up the stairs, with her portfolio of unsold drawings.

"Peach," said Rogers, the janitor, discriminately, as Rose drove away in her cab. "Too gay for this joint, I guess."

Rose Page's experience was not a new one, or in any sense unique, save,

of course, to her, and from that point of view it was the most daring and surprising and marvelous ever undergone; she woke occasionally in the night, and incredulously whispered, "'If this be I, as I suppose it be——'"

She was a Virginia girl, whose father had died and left wife and daughter with little save his portrait, his placid blessing and the heritage of his unstained honor. The following Summer, when the two were so poor they were fairly hungry, some one spending a week in the quiet little town, saw a few of the designs and drawings that Rose had always made since she was a girl of seven, and told her, with easy confidence, that in New York there was a future, and a great deal of money, for people who could design such patterns for fabrics and wall-papers and "things of that sort." So, in the Autumn, in the face of her mother's tears and protestations and gloomy prophecies, Rose had resolutely said good-bye to the shabby, handsome old Virginia home, and with an ache in her throat and a fine, brave light in her eyes, had come to New York. She had been but a fortnight in town and, strangely enough, had actually sold some of her drawings at what she considered a princely price; then had come Mrs. Clyde's invitation to a so-called informal little dinner. Life was beginning alluringly.

"Miss Page," announced the butler, in what was to Rose a tone of thunder. She was the first guest, and, as she entered the drawing-room, shyness made her raise her fine head proudly, and brought a flush into her cheeks. A magnificently upholstered old lady, whose yellow, wrinkled face bloomed with perennial cosmetics, and seemed a sentimental ivory miniature enclosed in brilliants, sat rather drearily under a portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds.

"My dear," she began abruptly, rising to meet her, "you're your mother's own daughter. How is Caroline? She was once the prettiest girl in Virginia—you are like her. Her letter told me you were here. I hope you're properly situated? Some time you

must come in for tea, and tell me about yourself. Not now, my dear; here are more people. You're to go in with Billy Sturges. Here he is now—Billy, I'm glad to see you—this is Miss Page; she's an old friend's daughter, Billy. You shall take her in to-night."

Old Mrs. Clyde, turning away in relief that Rose was presentable and needed no further attention from her, caught on that frank young woman's face a smile of something more than conventional pleasure at meeting Mr. Billy Sturges.

"Then you know each other already? So much the better. There, run along."

"By Jove!" chuckled Sturges, after the first commonplaces, as they went on to the dining-room; "by Jove!"

"You think so?" inquired Miss Page, solicitously.

"Surely!" grinned he. "Great luck, isn't it?"

"Great!"

"You remembered me, then?"

"I should think so. I could never forget a man I owe five cents."

"You're right! I shall expect it back—every cent! I'm an awful Jew as a creditor—you can't escape me. Hand it over, please!"

"What! Have I a pocket in my best gown? I think not! My money is tied in the corner of a handkerchief in the dressing-room. You can't guess, though, how grateful to you I am for your kindness."

"Then you didn't think it was very rude? I was afraid you—" Billy's blue eyes beamed with their most genial light.

"Rude? I should think it was rude. I was so shocked when you did it that—that I nearly committed another breach of etiquette by dashing off the car after you. But, really, would he have put me off because I didn't have anything less than a five-dollar bill?"

"Don't know," and Billy smiled, reminiscently. "Looked stormy—conductors are awful things when they see five-dollar bills."

"I was frightened to death. If you

hadn't— Do you know, that was the night of my arrival in New York. I've never been here before; I'm from the South."

"Really? Wish I could have that experience. I was born here—right in the glare of the electric light. I'd let you pay my fare, if I didn't have a nickel, on my first trip to New York. Would you?"

"Certainly not! Would you mind saying those words again?"

Billy laid down his soup-spoon in delight.

"I knew it; I knew you'd do it—they always do. You want me to say 'first' and 'New York,' don't you, Miss Page? Well, I won't."

"Oh, but you have, already! Thank you, I reckon I can get 'New York,' but I can't ever get 'first.'" Rose laughed.

"Pay me my nickel, and I'll teach you—if you'll give me lessons in 'can't' and 'South.'"

It pleased Rose immensely that her benefactor should be a proper person socially. She felt the shyness and alienation of the new experience wearing away in the sense of Billy's friendly protection. Before the dinner was half over, they were on the best of terms. In fact, few people who knew Billy Sturges at all were not on the best of terms with him.

"She's a winner," thought he, regarding her with frank admiration. And, before he knew it, he was saying, in his earnest voice, "Thank God, you're not clever."

Rose laughed derisively. "Oh, but I am."

"Oh, you know I didn't mean—that is—you're mighty clever, but—not like these, you know." He waved an embarrassed hand.

Evidently, Billy Sturges's conception of cleverness was elastic. The other women at the table were involved in an acrimonious discussion of the merits of "Elwell on Bridge" and, as a side issue, the value of cocker spaniels; the men were divided between Angie Fay's dancing and the slump in stocks.

"No, I'm not. I'm very stupid, I'm afraid. I'm not at all cultured, you know. Yes, I'm sure I'm very dull. I'm sorry." She looked distressed.

"I—I'm—glad," sighed Billy. "I like girls to be—just girls; don't you?"

"I'd rather have boys boys, thanks. I'm going to improve myself, now, by going away with Mrs. Clyde and leaving you alone to your cigarettes."

After dinner, they sat down at once to bridge. Mrs. Clyde was addicted to bridge and English politics.

"'Horatius,'" they call her, whispered Billy to Miss Page, as he passed her chair; "because she keeps the bridge night and day."

"Of course, you play, Miss Page?" perfunctorily inquired her hostess.

"But I don't—" began Rose, hesitatingly.

"Nonsense, my dear," Mrs. Clyde cut in, concisely; "there was never a Page who didn't have card-sense."

Miss Page played a fair game of bridge; for the Pages, as Mrs. Clyde had surmised, possessed "card-sense." She and her mother and the rector and his wife had passed endless evenings over the card-table in Virginia. But they never played for money. Mrs. Page had once told Rose that ladies never gambled. "It's not in good taste, dear," she had said, primly.

Rose had for partner a woman who was notoriously unlucky, so she said. "I never win," she asserted, and the truth of it seemed incontestable. The two lost steadily during the evening.

"Oh, Miss Page," her partner said, between silences, "I wish I had your spirits. I get so peevish and depressed. And you are as gay over our losses as if there weren't bonnets to buy, or opera-boxes or anything. We've lost scandalously."

"I'm perfectly depraved," retorted the girl. "I don't care what I lose; it never affects me."

Billy Sturges caught the gay words, and looked up at her keenly. "Wonder if she knows," he thought, uneasily.

"I'm glad we're not playing for money," Rose rattled on, merrily. "If we were—heavens! I'd have to walk home."

"Don't joke, Miss Page. You've made it hearts, and, for pity's sake, don't lead out of the wrong hand." They lost again.

Presently, the game broke up; most of them were going on to the Sidenhams' ball.

"Now, let's settle this up as soon as possible," cried Mrs. Clyde, excitedly; she was a winner.

The scores were reckoned up quickly.

"Humph!" sniffed the arrogant hostess; "only two hundred—I thought I should have more."

Miss Page's partner sank back in despair. "Oh, my dear, we've lost two hundred and fifty apiece. Isn't it horrid?"

Rose looked at her, a little startled, still uncomprehending. "Yes-s, it is too—" she began.

Suddenly, she saw Billy Sturges paying his debts; her eyes ran quickly over the others. Many of the losers were paying on the spot; the women were promising cheques. Her own partner was soundly berating their opponents.

"I'll never play with you again; you hoodoo me. But I'll send you a cheque to-morrow, my dear," she was groaning. She turned to Rose. "Of course, child, you haven't a cent with you—no one ever has. Send the robbers a cheque when you wish. It's only two-fifty—thank goodness."

"Yes, Miss Page; send us your cheque when you choose. We were lucky, weren't we?"

Rose, for the briefest fraction of a minute, felt herself sinking to the floor. Inside her was the sickening emptiness of fright. She remembered feeling it once before, when she saw a man drown. She put out her hand, blindly. It astonished her to find it resting on something firm. After an instant, the blood pounded back through her veins. Two hundred and fifty dollars! Then the thought of it amused her. She had,

in the whole world, just thirty-five dollars. "Send a cheque!"

She laughed, but there were false notes in her voice.

"You are faint," some one said, kindly. It gave her the cue she wanted. She felt she could manage words again. She saw Billy Sturges's eyes on her, and it nerved her.

"Just a silly turn. It's warm here, isn't it? Oh, it's nothing. Please, Mrs. Clyde, don't ring." She pulled herself together with a superb effort, and smiled at her opponents. "Yes, I'm awfully unlucky! You said—oh, yes, of course, it's two-fifty, isn't it? Thanks. You'll let me send it to you? Thank you. No, Mrs. Clyde. I've a cab somewhere. If you would send a man— Yes."

Rose was quite self-possessed now. Her voice was low and very cool, and her head was poised a little more haughtily. She had not forgotten the Page tradition: Win nobly; lose honorably. But she was glad they could not see the white, miserable fear in her heart. If only Sturges would stop looking at her!

"Good night," she murmured; "good night. It is good of you, Mrs. Clyde."

"By Jove!" Billy Sturges muttered to himself. "Oh, Lord, she didn't know! She's plucky—she's great. Good girl!"

He crossed over to Rose's side. "Miss Page, let me put you in your cab."

On the way down, Sturges tried to say what was in his big, generous heart, but she never once weakened her gay defense of words, and he was not clever enough, or brave enough, to attack it. Even after she had given him the address for the cabman, she leaned out and nodded a cheery little good night to him that brought the tears to his eyes, as he stood on the curb and waved his hat.

"It's a shame, a damned shame! Poor little girl!" Billy stooped to pick up a wilted bunch of violets that lay on the pavement. "She said they cost a whole quarter," he murmured, gently.

II

OVER in a corner of the grubby little studio, on a rumpled divan, lay a girl, sobbing. Her face was swollen, and her eyes red and bloodshot. She had slept little in the night, and then only to dream of a wicked creature dressed as the two-spot of diamonds, who said that his name was Horatius, and unless she sent him a cheque in the morning, he would throw her over the bridge.

It was the afternoon following Mrs. Clyde's dinner. Rose Page had risen dully that morning and, thrusting her portfolio under her arm, had set forth. At two o'clock she had dragged hopelessly home. No one wanted designs for anything ever again, she gathered. One firm had told her to call in two months' time, but, as she hardly expected to be alive by then, it had not cheered her. She was too miserable to eat any luncheon; even if she had wished it, she dared not spend the money for it.

So she flung herself down on the divan, and, in the helpless interval between courages, was weakly crying, to relieve her physical and mental exhaustion.

"I don't know what to do; I don't know what to do!" she sobbed. "I can't get the money; I can't! I haven't any jewels to sell, I haven't anything at all except mother's lace and the pearl brooch, and they wouldn't help much! Oh, it makes me ill to think of it. I'm so afraid of debt! I need every penny to send mother—poor mother, she sha'n't know, ever—and I suppose I must live. Oh, dear! oh, dear! I am alone here. They don't look at me, these city people. I can't even beg. There's nothing left. And I won't, oh, I won't tell them I can't pay. They'd think me a fool. I am a fool, a fool, a fool! But they were cruel to me. Oh, why aren't there more ways for nice girls to earn money?" Rose wiped away the tears with a scratchy burlap cushion, and then flung it away in feeble anger.

"I've got, just got, to get that

money! They sha'n't say I have disgraced my name."

But the little spurt of spirit oozed away in more tears. "Me, Rose Page, with gambling debts! I hope people in heaven don't know what we do here. Father would— Oh, I want to go home. I want my mother."

Sturges had knocked four times before he ventured to turn the knob and enter. He stopped short on the threshold when he saw her. "Oh, I beg pardon," he stammered. "I—I—oh, Miss Page——"

Rose looked at him with the stony calm of utter despair. "Don't mind me," she said, in the thick voice of tears. "I often do this—for exercise. It's—it's—f-f-fun." She laughed weakly. "I'm g-getting used to it now."

Billy Sturges looked about vaguely, and then sat down in a chair that wobbled disturbingly in its back legs. "Please, Miss Page," he attempted, nervously. He had not often seen women cry.

"Y-yes, isn't it? And it's so good for—for the—the lungs," Rose quavered, bravely. "Have you ever tried it?"

Billy rose hastily, and stepped in his top-hat. He kicked it, and Rose laughed. Instantly his manner became relieved, and he stopped poking holes in her drawing-paper with her hat-pin.

"Miss Page, can't I help?" he burst out, eagerly. "I don't know—that is, I oughtn't to know, but I can guess. You're in a peck of trouble over something. Don't tell me what, but if—I'm pretty poor at this sort of thing—never had any sisters—my mother died when I was a kid. I don't know how to do it, but, if you were a chap in hard luck— See here, Miss Page, pretend you are a chap in hard luck, will you?"

"I'm—I don't need to pretend, Mr. Sturges. I *am* a chap—in—hard luck." Rose's voice was very low and dull.

"There! I knew it. Now, it's easier to go on. It's just between us two fel-

lows. I think—I suppose— Hang it! It's that confounded bridge thing that's worrying you, isn't it?"

"It's—that—confounded—bridge—thing," Rose repeated, wearily.

"Well, then, if you—if you haven't—forgive me—but can't I lend you the money to pay that debt?"

Sturges's blue eyes were very tender. He gazed at the girl on the divan, beseechingly, until it suddenly occurred to him that he should not look at her at all, and then he sat up very straight, planted his feet firmly on the floor, and eyed his patent-leather boots.

There are moments when even a vaunted pride is utterly forgotten in the chance of relief from heavy burden and of easement from helpless suffering. Just then Rose was conscious of but one emotion—thanksgiving. She went to the window, and looked out over the dreary waste of chimney-pots. Below her, in a roof crevice, a sparrow brought a crumb of bread to its mate and stood by masterfully while the food was devoured. It seemed an omen. Rose searched for her handkerchief, and dabbed at her eyes. Presently, she faced the agonized Sturges.

"As one man to another, Mr. Sturges—is it very red?"

Billy stared. "Is—is *what* very red?"

"My nose, of course."

"No—o. Not ve—oh, not a bit, Miss Page." Billy was getting on famously in his knowledge of girls.

"Thank you," she said, soberly; "and, Mr. Sturges—"

"Yes, Miss Page."

"I'll—I'll—if you can—will—really lend me—that money—I shall take it gladly." The red surged into her cheeks as she spoke, and she was divided between a desire to laugh and an impulse to cry.

Sturges rose in honest relief, and put out his hand to her. "That's settled, then. And thank you for doing me the great honor. May I mail the cheque to you to-night?"

Miss Page looked frankly into Stur-

ges's eyes; and what she saw there she liked, for she put her hand in his, confidently.

"If you don't mind," she said, "I'd like to explain a little. I did not know—understand they were playing for money. We—all at home haven't done that, you know, and it frightened me terribly when I found out what I'd done. And—and—it's true that I'm very poor. I couldn't think of any way in the world I could get that money. My mother couldn't know, and I—well"—she smiled—"I haven't made that enormous sum here, yet. So, you see! And another thing, I've a horror of debt. It's inbred. And, oh, this is good of you to do it. You've saved me—everything!" Rose hesitated shyly. "And I shall, of course, pay it all back to you just as soon as——"

Billy's face was burning. "Please, Miss Page, please—that is—let's cut that out. Of course, you'll—but at your convenience, I beg."

"I shall begin properly, Mr. Sturges." And, going to her desk, she wrote:

"I promise to pay Mr. William Sturges two hundred and fifty dollars as soon as possible.

"ROSE PAGE.

"November eighth."

It is to Billy's credit that he took this promissory bit of blue paper without a smile, and solemnly deposited it in an important-looking leather wallet.

"Wait," she added. "Here's five cents on account—the fare you paid for me; I forgot it last night. You're born to be a very present help in time of trouble."

"I'd like to be, Miss Page"—Billy was very earnest and very gentle; it made her want to cry again, but for an entirely new reason—"to you."

As Sturges strode away down the creaking stairs, Rose felt a sudden strong impulse to go to the door and watch his broad tweed shoulders till they were out of sight. Instead, she stood meditatively in the centre of the dusky little studio. "I don't know whether to laugh or to cry or to pray."

III

It was the morning after Sturges's call. Rose had opened the big white envelope with its illegible, scrawling superscription. She sat for a long time quite still, the contents in her lap. That slip of pink paper, with those few precious, inky flourishes on it, awed and frightened her. She wanted to send it back hastily; a nervous sense of what an improper thing she had done sank down on her. But his note helped a little. He had said only, "From one chap to another."

As she sat there, Miss Warren came in. She had a way of dropping in uncannily at odd times. She was a person one never knew what to do with when she appeared—silent, suspicious, or suddenly loquacious.

The two girls talked desultorily for some minutes, Miss Warren furtively eying the crisp, pink slip of paper.

"Did you get an order at Bartell's?" she asked, suddenly.

"Yes; did you?" answered Rose, unsuspectingly.

"No, they turned me down—for you." Miss Warren's laugh was a little bitter.

"That is too bad of them, to—" began Rose, all sympathy.

"Oh, I don't mind. It's my luck. You're grand to-day, getting cheques, aren't you? Bartell's, already?"

Rose's voice grew a little colder, and she tried to control the waves of red that sprang to her cheeks. "No, not Bartell's."

"Oh!" The intonation was suggestive.

Rogers was at the door, asking for Miss Page. The cheque fluttered to the floor, as Rose hastened to speak to him. With a quick, deft gesture Miss Warren caught it up, read it, and threw it back on the floor before Rose had returned. There was a queer look of unpleasant satisfaction on her face. "I'm going back to work," she said, briefly, and slipped away.

That was the last time she ever entered the studio.

The lean days were beginning in

earnest for Rose. After the cheque had been cashed, the money put into money-orders and sent away, there was a certain sense of relief; yet the burden was not lifted. The thought of that debt was like a pebble in her shoe. There was a constant, wearing irritation. She felt, all at once, as if she never wished to see Billy Sturges again; the sight of him rubbed the raw wound in self-respect and hurt pride. Her small reserve fund of thirty-five dollars she dared not touch. "I'll save it for an operation or a trousseau," she said to herself, with grim humor.

Day and night she bent over her drawing-board; and, gradually, she began to find a market for her designs. But the remuneration was pitifully small in proportion to her needs, and she was often so harassed and depressed that her brain refused to direct her aching fingers over the paper, and the day's work had to be thrown away.

She set apart weekly for her own living just seven dollars. Five more went every Friday to her mother, and the witty, keen, amusing letter that accompanied it never once betrayed how heavy the days were for the sender. And, as often as possible, she managed in some way to save out another bill to put aside for her debt to Sturges. When money was scarcer with her than usual, her own little portion was made to make up the difference.

She took to cooking her own breakfasts and luncheons—when she remembered the luncheons. She got her dinner at a "Quick Lunch Palace" around the corner. All her pretty coloring was gone, and her eyes grew hollow, with dark circles beneath them. Rogers, the janitor, who had seen girls come in and go out of the old rookery for twelve years, and who knew the signs, nodded his head authoritatively.

"It's the way they all go—most of 'em. Noo York'll take it out of 'em, all right."

Billy Sturges fell into the habit of dropping in on Rose for Saturday-afternoon tea. The green-denim screen was in place, a tiny fire of coals

burned in the grate—he never guessed the privations necessary for that fire—Rose had on her one good gown and sat well in the shadow, and her greeting was unfailingly gay and cordial. But never once did she allow the talk to become in the slightest degree personal, so far as her own matters were concerned.

Sturges scrupulously sent her receipts for the sums that came to him, without other enclosure, and with only her writing on the blue envelope to identify the sender. The acceptance of these pitiful payments invariably sent him off into a bad temper. The pathos of the unspoken, faithful struggle hurt him bitterly, but he could do nothing, except grind his teeth and stuff the offending bills into a far corner of his desk. When he saw her on Saturdays, she was so alive and merry, and the cramped little studio was so indefinably festive, that his fears for her were allayed. Probably no man ever penetrated the depth of a woman's struggle.

Presently, Billy realized the fact that he was desperately in love with his debtor. He took a long walk in the Park one day, and seriously went over the situation. After an hour of it, he hailed a hansom and drove serenely home. "I sha'n't say anything about it to her until that debt is paid," he assured himself. "I know one fellow, if he's the right sort, generally feels a little shy of another when he owes him a debt. This is bigger than a million to her—and she's the right sort, bless her!" In the shadow of the cab, Billy pulled out of the leather wallet a bunch of dried violets and a promissory note, both of which he kissed.

"But, great God, what if she wouldn't have me!" he murmured, struck with sudden fear.

IV

AFTER a time, Rose noticed that her fellow-lodgers never stopped now to see her; she imagined they were avoiding her in the halls; girls who had nodded in friendly fashion to her, now

bowed coldly, if they bowed at all. She was so tired these days that, somehow, it made little difference. She took the fresh hurt dully; it all seemed part of a wretched, endless Winter, whose raw damp got into her bones and settled around her heart. Only one desire was uppermost in her mind—she must pay off that debt! After that, anything might happen; she thought she would like to die then, if she were only sure that dying meant an eternal blank period of sleep. Vaguely, she tried to think what she had done to bring about this estrangement from the others; but she could not, and the effort made her head ache worse than usual.

Bartell's were taking nearly all of her work now, and that kept her certain of a living. Besides, she could set more and more aside for her payments to Sturges. They told her at Bartell's that her work was much better than Miss Warren's, and that they were taking no more of the latter's. Rose tried to be sorry, but she could not be even that.

In February, she gave up seeing Sturges entirely, even on Saturdays. She locked her door one day, and sat miserably in a corner until the sound of his retreating footsteps had died away. She missed him sadly, but she felt that she could not afford the extra tea and coals. His eager, blunt notes of inquiry she left unanswered, apathetically. She wondered if she could ever really care for anything again.

Sturges, at first, fancied Rose was ill and alone, and the thought drove him nearly crazy. Yet the steady appearance of the hateful remittances seemed to disprove this. Then, when his anxious notes received no reply, he cursed himself for a clumsy brute, and decided that in some way he had irretrievably hurt her feelings. He went about miserably for days. At last, he took to haunting the entrance of the studio-building, at spare moments, in the hope of seeing her.

Late one Wintry March twilight, Billy turned off from Fifth avenue toward her room. It was snowing heavily,

and the lights of the town flickered a feeble yellow through the dancing curtain of white. The side street was nearly deserted. Near the entrance to the building, he found himself behind two women. One of them was speaking, in a peculiarly penetrating voice that rasped his nerves.

"Oh, yes, he's there most of the time, night and day, shamelessly. I've seen him—he's a very common sort—big, flashy, the club-man type, you know. I have complained to Rogers, and he is going to get her out."

The other gasped. "Who is he, do you know?"

"Yes; his name is Sturges, and—" Here the speaker lowered her voice and spoke rapidly. Billy caught only a word or two, but those made him clench his fists.

"She *takes money* from him! Oh, Miss Warren, that's perfectly shocking! Are you sure?"

"Yes, indeed. I saw a cheque of his in her room one day. I've never been there since. Oh, she's——"

Suddenly, there loomed up before Miss Warren a tall, snow-covered man with eyes that were hard and steely and merciless with anger. He stopped her, imperatively.

"Please wait!" The voice was controlled and even, but something in it frightened Miss Warren. If she had known more of Billy Sturges, she would have had just cause for fear.

"I, quite by accident, overheard what you were saying. You were speaking of Miss Page?"

"What right—?" began Miss Warren, shrilly.

"It was of Miss Page?" he went on, inexorably, and she had to answer.

"Yes, it was. What of it?"

"I am Mr. Sturges," went on Billy, "and I want to tell you, you have made a mistake. You may not have intended to, but you have—lied."

He stood over her, trembling with suppressed passion at the woman's injustice.

Miss Warren shrank away from him. Her companion eyed her in astonished curiosity.

"You were speaking of a cheque—my cheque?"

His stern questions brought a purplish flush into Miss Warren's cheeks.

"Did you know why Miss Page had that cheque? Did she tell you? *Did she?*"

"No—she did not, but I—" she essayed, sullenly.

"Don't you dare!" warned Billy, his face hard and set.

Miss Warren did not dare.

"If you will pardon me, I—I should like to tell you why that cheque was sent Miss Page by me. I infer you are interested. This money was given in payment of a foolish gambling debt of mine to Miss Page and was, I may add, for your further enlightenment, returned to me by the next mail. Further, let me ask that you will stop this contemptible story you had just now on your lips."

Billy squared his shoulders, and looked imperiously down on two scared women. Miss Warren's companion, a girl with keen brown eyes under straight brows, impulsively put out her hand.

"Thank you," she said. "Forgive me, will you?"

Sturges took it. "I thought you'd not be so hard on her," he said, gently.

Miss Warren slipped quietly past into the open doorway.

"I think Miss Page got her work away from her," said the other girl, slowly; "not on purpose—she does better stuff than Miss Warren."

Billy nodded.

"I see."

V

STURGES strode wretchedly up and down the studio-block for fifteen minutes, swearing softly to the falling snow.

"How could any one hurt a girl like that! It's cruel. Lord, I could almost have struck her! Poor girl, poor—Rose!"

"And they've been saying all that about her—and me," he continued, wrathfully; "making it worse than

ever for her. I oughtn't to go there, I suppose—now. But, good God! I've got to—I've got to see—I can't stand it unless I do."

Billy paused irresolutely in the snow for a moment. The words of Miss Warren came to him sharply and stung him like a lash: "I've complained to Rogers, and he is going to get her out."

"I'll see this Rogers in hell first," he muttered, and started on a half-run toward the studio.

It was nearly seven o'clock; the pavements lay three inches deep with white. The wind began to drive the snow through the air with fierce, blinding swoops. Rose dragged down the five long flights, and out to the heavy entry door. She had in her hand a letter to Sturges; it contained the last instalment of her debt. For two weeks she had starved and pinched and toiled; she had added again and again the items of her account with Sturges, and she had determined to make this the final payment.

Rogers put his head above the basement stairs, and called her name.

"What is it, Mr. Rogers?" Rose asked.

It was not Rogers's way to approach a matter subtly. He had lost too many points before now by diplomacy. So he said only, with a certain grim kindness: "We'll be wanting your room next week, Miss Page."

"Why? why?" she quavered.

"There's them as 'r' complainin'."

Rose tried to hold up her head and fight out the battle; her hands clenched tightly; she tried to assure herself of the rights of a free, innocent being under the burden of injustice; but, instead, she turned away, drearily.

"In the morning I—I'll see you about it. I'm—very—distressed—"

Rogers shook his head, ambiguously, at the retreating figure.

Rose was sick and exhausted. She shrank from the flapping gusts, and battled feebly toward the letter-box on the corner. All at once she ran full-tilt into a big man who was stalking doggedly through the storm. The shock made her totter.

"I beg pardon," he said, mechanically stretching out his hand to keep her from falling. Then: "It's—it's you! Isn't it?"

Rose smiled weakly at Billy's amazement.

"I reckon so. It—was—once."

"Where on earth—?" he burst out.

"If you're going to ask where I'm going, you needn't. I'm not going anywhere. I came to give you this; at least, I didn't come for that, but now you're here you may as well take it—it's the last one." She put a blue envelope in his hand.

"Thank God it is! You've—you've nearly driven me insane by those—*those things!*" he said, brokenly. She suddenly seemed to him so very frail and weak and feminine; his arms involuntarily opened.

"Yes," she answered, dully. "Yes, thank God! Good night."

"Why—you're all wet!" he said, tenderly putting his hand on her arm.

"Don't," she murmured. "I can't bear sympathy—just now. I must go—home—while they'll let me."

Rose swayed a little toward him. He seemed to her so splendidly strong; if only she could rest a moment!

"Rose," Billy's voice was husky.

"Don't," faintly.

"Rose!" His great heart was pleading, but he had no other words.

She looked up at him with a tearful smile. "Must I always be in your debt?" she whispered into his coat.

For answer, he bent and kissed her wet, snowy face. "You always must," he said, soberly.

"Unlucky at cards—" she murmured.

"Rose, have you had your dinner?" he asked, with an inspiration. Dinner was Billy's sovereign remedy for all ills.

She shook her head, vaguely.

"I know a place. Come."

Tucking her hand in his arm, he led her away. But the storm no longer buffeted her, and she was not weary now.

Presently, they were sitting at a little, secluded table at Pierre's, the old

Frenchman's, and between them
smoked a heavenly broiled steak with
a green garland about it.

Rose looked at her laden plate; the
delicious, buttery scent ascended to her
nostrils. Then she burst into tears.

Billy tried to catch her hand under
the table.

"Dearest—oh, dear girl—Rose—
please!"

"Don't mind me—it's nothing—
only, I'm so hungry!"



THE YOUNG MOTHER

THE Host lifts high the candle-light—
Out in the dark she waits before—
"Now who is this at mid of night,
Comes faring to my door?"

With rushes is the chamber set;
The house is sweet without, within;
For it may be she will forget
The place where she hath been.

But lonely, lonely in the room,
With strange eyes looks she all about;
She sees the broken boughs in bloom,
The red wine poured out.

They crowd around her where she stands,
The children and the elders there;
They put the cup within her hands;
They break the loaf so fair.

Oh, what to her that they are kind!
Oh, let the tears come like a tide!
She cannot keep from out her mind
The son for whom she died!

LIZETTE WOODWORTH REESE.



A FOOL AND HIS MONEY

"WASN'T some money left Spendall?"
"Oh, yes; and it all left him, long ago."



WHEN a man is so angry that words fail him it is often his salvation.

THE MEADS OF BESSIMA

*Once again to see them, ah,
Matchless meads of Bessima!*

BY fleet waters glancing golden,
Girdled as with dream they lie,
Where, by stainless skies beholden,
They are stainless as the sky.

For while night, by Allah's guiding,
Sows the blue with shimmering flowers,
Here the day, through his confiding,
Buildeth radiant blossom bowers.

Out of all the tints of morning—
Sunrise arras—are they made;
And they have for their adorning
Arabesques of shine and shade.

Spicy asphodelian attars
O'er them hover, and the breeze
A divine nepenthe scatters
From the poppy-chaliees.

Here would I a House of Pleasure
Rear, like fabled Kubla Khan;
Love should be my chiefest treasure—
Love beyond the ken of man.

At my doorway, on his zither
Should the gay cicada play;
And the bee should bear me thither
His full bass for virelay.

Wafted through the open lattice,
There should falter, there should float,
All the prisoned passion that is
Compassed in the bulbul's note.

I should know—fond vision this is!—
Biding, Rose of Love, with you,
All the Prophet's promised blisses
At the bourn of Dreams-Come-True!

CLINTON SCOLLARD.



IT must be said of Adam that he never uttered one unkind word to his mother-in-law.

THE WRECK AND THE LETTERS

By Cyrus Townsend Brady

THE smash-up was one of the worst that ever happened on the B. S. & W. road.

The Westfield night express had been wrecked at Elwood Junction about three o'clock in the morning. It had been raining more or less for a week all over the northwestern part of the state, and the bad weather had culminated in a cloud-burst. A small bridge, which was really nothing more than a short piece of trestle-work thrown over a tiny branch of the Elwood River, which was usually as dry as a floor, was partially washed out, the stringers, ties and rails being left standing.

In the darkness, the engine went through it. The ravine was both shallow and narrow, the engine filled the space from bank to bank, and the baggage- and mail-car and the coach piled in on top of it. Later on they found the engineer, with his fireman also, dead under the engine, so that he was beyond censure for running at so high a speed—sixty miles an hour—under such conditions.

The train, which was the limited express of the road, did no local business. There were only a few people in the coach, all of whom escaped with their lives, at least. The two rear sleepers did not leave the track, fortunately, but the first one, that carrying the through passengers from the South, strange to say, was telescoped with the preceding coach, in spite of the fact that it was a new and heavy Pullman. It was in that ill-fated car that most of the loss, save that among the train crew, occurred. The berths had nearly all been occu-

pied, and nine passengers in the front half of the car were killed, while many were severely injured.

Fortunately, as it was Summer, there was no conflagration to add its horrors to the scene. A special train with nurses and physicians and other helpers, together with the wrecking crew, was rushed down from Elwood without loss of time, and the work of rescuing the wounded and clearing the track was at once begun. The dead were laid along the station platform at Elwood, as they were removed from the special train, for identification prior to shipment to their several destinations, and the wounded were made as comfortable as possible either in the cars, at the station, or at the emergency hospital. By daylight, the claim-agent of the road, who, with other officials at Beverly, had been notified by wire, arrived, and took charge of the bodies.

There were two women, a little girl, a baby, a youth of about seventeen, and four men. After more or less difficulty and delay they were all identified, and their relatives communicated with, except in the case of one man. He appeared to have been a tall, handsome man of about thirty. He had evidently undressed and gone regularly to bed in the sleeper, for he had nothing on him but a suit of pajamas. There was no mark of any sort on them, and nothing whatever to give any clue to the man's name on or about his person—a naked body in a suit of pajamas, that was all. The sleeping-car conductor had been killed, while the porter was badly wounded and in a senseless condition.

Of course, the unidentified man's baggage and clothing were somewhere in the wreck, if they had not been ground to pieces in the ruin. But how to find such things, or how to identify them with the man, was a puzzling question. There was a great heap of miscellaneous articles on the station platform, which had been taken from the wreck, but at present it was impossible to separate or assign them to any one with any certainty whatsoever. The claim-agent, a tall, slender young man, whose quiet, rather melancholy air gave little outward evidence of his inward keenness and capacity, was at his wits' end to know how to identify the body in question.

As he stood pondering the problem, one of his assistants came up and informed him that the porter of the wrecked sleeper had at last recovered consciousness, although it was evident that his hours were numbered. As he spoke, four men brought the stricken negro out on the platform on a stretcher, intending to load him on a hospital train in which others of the more severely wounded were to be taken down to Beverly. It was just possible, thought the claim-agent, that the porter might be able to identify the man. He motioned to the bearers to halt, and then, with the help of the assistant, lifted up the dead body so that the porter could see the man's face.

"Wilder," said the claim-agent, gently, "I'm sorry to bother you now, but here is a passenger from your car about whom I can find out nothing. Can you help us to identify him? Do you know his name?"

The porter stared feebly at the face of the dead man.

"Doan know his name, suh," he muttered.

"Where was his berth? Can you recollect that?"

"He was in lowah five, suh, I think."

"Can you give us any other clue, Wilder?"

The wounded man thought deeply

for a few moments, by a very painful effort.

"Yas, suh, he sent a telegram last night f'um Ladew to Miss Inez—Inez—Lancy—at——"

He stopped, faltered, struggled to go on. One of the bystanders gave him a drink of whiskey, but he had fainted.

"Never mind," said the claim-agent, compassionately; "take him into the car, men. That's enough to trace this man."

Laying the dead man gently on the platform again, the claim-agent went into the telegraph-office, and wired the operator at Ladew to repeat to him, for the purpose of establishing an identification, the telegram sent last night at six o'clock by a passenger on number three to a Miss Inez Lancy, whereabouts unknown. In a short time the original message was in his hand. It ran this way:

MISS INEZ LANCY,

% Hotel Sullivan, Westfield.

Will meet you Monday morning, at ten-thirty, same place.

HARRY.

Here was a valuable clue. A wire was at once despatched to the proprietor of the Hotel Sullivan, directing him to inform Miss Inez Lancy, presumably one of his guests, that a man, supposed to be the man who had appointed a meeting with her at ten-thirty that morning, and who signed his name "Harry," had been killed in the wreck at Elwood Junction, and to ask Miss Lancy if she would come down and identify the body, or give information which would lead to its immediate disposition. Two hours later, Miss Inez Lancy descended from the steps of the parlor-car on the morning local, and was received by the claim-agent, who had been notified by wire to expect her.

Miss Inez Lancy was dressed in black—not mourning, of course, there had been no time for that—but she had at least discarded all colors, save that which shone in her very pretty eyes and in the red of her rounded cheeks. She was a stunning-looking woman, if a trifle bold in her carriage. Tall, golden-haired, she made quite an im-

posing appearance, in spite of her general air of agitation and, strange to say, of anxiety and apprehension. Yet there was something about her which impressed the claim-agent unpleasantly, something he did not like. There were things lacking in her, not compensated for by other things added. She did not seem quite—but her quality or her character was nothing to him. He put all such considerations aside, and met her with an excellent assumption of most respectful sympathy.

"I am the claim-agent of the road," he said. "And you, I presume, are Miss Lancy?"

"Yes, yes," she exclaimed, in great agitation. "Oh, sir, tell me——"

She clasped her hands appealingly, and looked at him from beneath the fronting shadow of her very large hat. The pose, the manner, the voice, were perfect, and yet——

"You got my wire, madam?" he asked, whereat she nodded.

"Yes. Take me to him at once."

The body of the poor man had been taken to a local undertaking establishment, and a drive of a short distance, during which Miss Lancy elaborately sobbed into her handkerchief, brought them to the door. Once in the private room—"the mortuary chamber," advertising circulars called it—the woman stepped to the side of the casket, and lifted the cloth covering the face of the dead.

"It is he, it is he!" she screamed, throwing herself upon the body with every outward manifestation of grief and agony.

She kissed the face of the dead again and again, lavishing endearments upon him. It was all very touching and affecting indeed, thought the claim-agent, and yet— However, he managed to quiet Miss Lancy at last. He took her to the village hotel, where, after getting the address of the man's relatives, he left her to the tender ministrations of the landlady and her assistants.

The man's name was Henry Richardson. He had been a mining-engineer

by profession, and a heavy buyer and owner of mining properties in Colorado. His father was also greatly interested in mines, being one of the largest mine owners in that state. Miss Inez Lancy declared that she was the dead man's fiancée, that he was coming to Westfield that morning, as his telegram showed, to marry her forthwith. Her grief was terrible to see, and her condition evoked the sympathy and pity of all the good women of the little town, who were unremitting in their efforts to assuage her sorrow.

The claim-agent immediately wired the elder Mr. Richardson, and received instructions to prepare the body for shipment in the best possible manner, and forward it to Denver without delay. The only train which made a Denver connection did not leave till night, however, and late in the afternoon the claim-agent received a telegram from Hot Springs, Arkansas, addressed to the local agent at Elwood, by the way, which greatly astonished him. It ran as follows, being written with a woman's discursiveness:

Henry Richardson, of whose death I am just informed, is my husband. Will arrive Tuesday morning. Hold body till I come.

MRS. HENRY RICHARDSON.

The story of the wreck had not yet appeared in any of the papers, there was no source from which the woman signing herself Mrs. Henry Richardson, could have heard of her husband's death except from his father in Denver; for, outside of the claim-agent and Miss Inez Lancy, no one else knew or could know of it. In the face of such reasoning, the conclusion that she was really the man's wife was irresistible.

If that were so, who was Miss Inez Lancy?

There had always been a suspicion of that young lady in the claim-agent's mind, he thought, triumphantly. He put the telegram in his pocket, after giving directions to hold the body and notify the father in Denver, asking advice from him, and walked slowly down the village street to the hotel.

Arrived there, he immediately asked for Miss Lancy.

"You can't possibly see her," said the landlady, a kind-hearted, motherly old body, who had been most attentive to the woman; "she is quite prostrated over this terrible affair, and is lying down. She must not be disturbed on any account."

"I am very sorry," insisted the claim-agent, politely but firmly; "she must see me. I have an important message about Mr. Richardson."

"The poor thing's almost dead with grief and shock and——"

"Yes, yes, I know, but you must tell her I must see her at once, nevertheless."

The woman at last went off, evidently resentful of the claim-agent's lack of sympathy and consideration for her charge—"like the soulless corporation he represents, intruding upon the sorrows of that poor lamb up-stairs," she muttered, as she went. Well, it turned out that Miss Lancy, "poor lamb," would see the claim-agent after all, and, after a few moments, he was ushered into her presence. The landlady showed a disposition to linger, but, at the claim-agent's pointed request, she at last flounced indignantly out of the room.

"Miss Lancy," said the claim-agent to that lady, who sat languidly, half-reclining in a large arm-chair near the window, her face turned carefully away from the light, "I intended, in accordance with his father's directions, to send the body of Mr. Richardson——"

"My poor, poor love!" wailed Miss Lancy.

"—to Denver to-night. But a few moments since I received a telegram from his——"

The claim-agent paused. The woman before him sat bolt upright now, her grief merged into a sudden interest in what he was about to say.

"Yes. Go on," she exclaimed; "from whom?"

"—from his wife," answered the claim-agent, abruptly, at the same time

carefully watching the face of his companion.

"His wife!" she faltered, turning very red indeed.

"Certainly, his wife. Didn't you know that he was married?" he asked, swiftly.

"Of course—I—er—certainly not!" she answered, in great confusion; "and I don't believe it, either. It is some impostor. Why, he was engaged to me. His telegram proved that."

It was a bold statement, but it failed.

"It proved that he was coming to meet you, certainly, but nothing more," rejoined the claim-agent.

"That woman is some adventuress. I shall stay and face her. He was mine—mine!" burst out Miss Lancy, vehemently.

It was exceedingly well done, thought the claim-agent, admiringly. Miss Lancy might have made a fortune on the stage, he was sure, and he was an excellent judge. But to be a successful claim-agent it is necessary to be able to fathom human nature thoroughly, and Miss Lancy's whole performance did not deceive him.

"Miss Lancy," he said, gravely, "I am sorry to be compelled to contradict you or to question your assertions, but I assure you that I am convinced that the lady in question is his wife, and——"

"I didn't know it, anyway," she interrupted, desperately anxious to maintain her position.

"Pardon me, you virtually admitted it a moment since, and——"

There was a knock at the door, which the claim-agent took the liberty of answering himself, under the circumstances. A moment after, he was reading a telegram sent him from the station, which was from Mr. Richardson, canceling his former wire and directing the body to be held for the arrival of his son's wife.

"That settles it, Miss Lancy," said the claim-agent, putting the yellow slip of paper in her hand.

"I'll stay here and confront the woman," she burst out, viciously.

"Pardon me again," returned the claim-agent, suavely—he was a very polite claim-agent, indeed—"I think you will not."

"I will, I will, I tell you!"

What a coarse, vulgar woman! thought the claim-agent. All he said, however, was: "You will go back to Westfield to-night, madam, and you will stay away from here till that man is shipped to Denver in custody of his wife."

"Oh, will I? Who'll make me?"

"I trust your own good sense will show you that I am right."

"It doesn't. Now, who'll make me go?"

"I will. I won't have you make a scene and a scandal over that man in the presence of his poor, bereaved wife, on our lines. Afterward, you will do as you please. Now you will go, stay away and keep quiet."

"I'll do just as I please, now!" she retorted, defiantly, but evidently very ill at ease.

"The train leaves at nine to-night. I shall be here with a carriage at half-after eight. Meantime, you will not mention this to any one, I am sure," he continued, inflexibly; then he bowed to her—the claim-agent was always polite—and left her baffled, furious, yet determined to have her way.

His calm confidence shook her assurance to a marked degree, yet she strove to keep up her spirits, and to cling to her resolution to stay just where she was and confront the wife. As for the claim-agent, in spite of his firmness, he was filled with dismay. If Miss Lancy absolutely refused to go, he could see no way to compel her to leave except by force, which was not to be thought of. Yet, go she must. He was resolved that there should be no scene, no scandal about the dead man, no two women claiming rights that belonged to one, no adventuress—so he was satisfied Miss Lancy was to be described—disputing with the dead man's lawful wife. He even felt a sort of sympathy for the dead man himself, albeit his career was evidently not a spotless one. The man's fame would

be utterly blasted if Miss Lancy remained and created a scene, and he could say never a word nor urge a plea in his own defense. Yes, the woman must be got away at all hazards, but how? He racked his fertile brain for some means—and in vain.

His cogitations were interrupted by the approach of the general superintendent of the road, a veteran railroad man, who had risen after many years from the ranks. He had assumed charge of the work of clearing the road that day.

"Here," he said, handing the claim-agent a thick package of letters, "you'd better take charge of these. They were picked up in the sleeper. The woman who wrote 'em, and the man, too, must be a bad lot. They're sickening, even to me."

The claim-agent took the package, and, returning to the station, he read over the first one. There was no name in the letter till the signature was reached, and that was "*Inez*"! The letters could not be described. They revealed a depth of depravity on the part of writer and receiver which made the claim-agent almost doubt their humanity. They settled one puzzling question, however. At half-after eight the claim-agent presented himself at the door of Miss Lancy's room. Bidden to enter, he found that young lady hatless and seemingly composed, with apparently no outward intention of leaving that night.

"I've come for you, Miss Lancy," said the claim-agent.

"I see you have," she returned, coolly, "and, as I said before, it does not suit me to leave to-night."

"Miss Lancy, do you recognize this letter?" said the claim-agent, spreading open one of the packages, and holding it close to the lamp, so that she could see it.

The woman gazed at it, shivered violently, and turned a dull, angry red again.

"You're no gentleman!" she said, wrathfully, "to read a lady's letter! Besides, I didn't write it, any way,"

she went on, in a vain effort to repair her blunder.

"I should not like to have any one see such letters as these," said the claim-agent, "even the lowest—lady," he paused—and how she hated him for that pause!—"in the land would not like that, would she?"

"You brute, you brute!" cried the woman, looking as if she could kill him.

"It is a quarter to nine now, Miss Lancy; we have just time enough to get to the station," said the claim-agent.

"I won't go, I tell you!"

"Allow me—your hat," he continued, unheeding her interruptions as he handed it to her.

"My bill here—I haven't—I left my purse—" she faltered, rising, in spite of herself.

"I'll attend to that. You will take my arm, so, this way—here is the carriage." The claim-agent was a wonderfully polite young man.

He did not feel safe, however, until, standing on the platform, he watched the lights of the express bearing the unfortunate Miss Lancy northward, disappear in the darkness. It had been a trying day for the claim-agent. He took off his hat, and wiped the perspiration from his forehead.

"And she forgot to ask me for the letters, she was so angry," he murmured, in no little surprise, as he turned to go back to the hotel for the night.

II

THE morning express was due at Elwood at ten o'clock. The claim-agent met it, of course. As the long train drew up at the platform, he stepped back toward the steps of the Southern through sleeper from St. Louis, nerving himself up for the difficult and somewhat unpleasant task of receiving the widow of the dead mining-engineer. Only one passenger left the sleeper, and she was a woman. The porter set her bag on the platform, and reentered his car. Uncertain as to direction in her unfamiliar

surroundings, she turned away from the approaching claim-agent, and paused, in hesitation as to what to do next.

He had time before he reached her to notice that she was small in stature, but with a beautiful figure, well set off by her fashionably cut, exquisitely fitting black gown. Something about her appearance caused the heart of the claim-agent to throb madly in his breast. Instinctively, he quickened his pace, his arm stretched out toward her. He was close by her side when she turned suddenly, faced him, lifted her hand in great astonishment, and exclaimed:

"You!"

The claim-agent recovered himself by a tremendous effort. Dissimulation is supposedly an attribute peculiar to the other sex, but he noticed that whereas he was successful in controlling himself, the woman seemed utterly unable to regain her composure. She stared at him as if he had risen from the dead. Her face, which had been very pale, slowly flamed with color, her lip trembled until she bit it to keep it still, and a light, whether of terror, surprise, satisfaction or appeal, or all four, he could not tell, came into her brown eyes.

"You!" she exclaimed again, breathlessly.

"Yes, I," he answered, formally, lifting his hat, and making an attempt to pass her.

"I did not know—I did not expect—" she faltered.

"No, I suppose not," he answered, with some bitterness; "but you will pardon me, I am expecting a lady——"

"A lady?" she interrupted, with a curiously resentful intonation.

"Yes, the widow of a passenger killed in a wreck at——"

"I forgot him," murmured the woman, in deep contrition.

"All aboard!" called the conductor, suddenly.

"Wait!" cried the claim-agent, lifting a warning hand and putting his foot on the car step, "I must see if she is in the sleeper."

"I am Mrs. Richardson," abruptly exclaimed the woman to whom he had been speaking, at the same time laying her hand on his arm.

The claim-agent stepped from the car, signaled to the conductor to go ahead—that was the first thing to be done—and once more faced the woman. This time he was the weaker vessel.

"Oh!" he exclaimed, as the train slowly passed them.

The woman nodded. The claim-agent bowed formally again.

"I beg your pardon," he said; "I did not know."

"Of course not; how could you?"

"If you will come this way, madam, I have a carriage here; I will take you to him."

He spoke indifferently, in spite of his excessive agitation.

"I want to tell you," said the woman, so soon as they entered the carriage, "that—after we—after I left you and was married—to—him—I found out what a terrible mistake it was. And—oh, don't look at me so! It is cruel!"

She leaned her head against the cushions, and sobbed bitterly.

The claim-agent did not know what to do, and he was a rarely resourceful young man, too. He knew well enough what he wanted to do, however. He wanted to slip his arm around the woman's waist, lay her head on his shoulder, take her hands in his and comfort her—kiss away her tears. He had done this before, too, but it did not seem quite appropriate conduct for the present strange situation. So he sat up very straight and stiff, and did nothing. 'Tis a wise claim-agent who knows when to do nothing.

"We had not lived—together—since the first few months of our marriage, six years ago," resumed his companion, after a time.

Ah, well he knew the time! He could recall as yesterday the shock sustained by a young railroad man who had gone West to seek his fortune, when he received that incoherent, blotted, tear-stained letter from the

sweetheart who had promised to wait for him, begging him to forget her because she was going to be married to another man. Absence, poverty, the wishes of friends, the pressure of parental desire, had overborne her resistance. And now he was sitting by her side again, his pulses beating, his soul thrilling. And she was married, and her husband was dead, and he was taking her to him. And, until this moment, he had never known the man's name. Her voice called him to himself again.

"There was no scandal, no divorce; we just separated. Henry—Mr. Richardson—was such a good man. When he found I loved—that I did not care for him—he—he had a right to be very angry, as he was. It was my fault. I ought never to have married. I was to blame. He was so good and true a man!" The claim-agent thought grimly of Miss Inez Lancy and the package of letters in his pocket, but he said nothing. "And now he is dead, in this sudden, awful way—poor Henry!"

She broke down, and sobbed afresh as the carriage stopped. The claim-agent got out, and offered her his hand.

"Is—he—in there?" she asked.

"Yes. Do you wish to see him now?"

She nodded, dropped her veil, and followed the claim-agent into the room. Her demeanor there was very different from what Miss Lancy's had been. She stood quietly looking upon the face of the dead, murmuring, "Poor, poor Henry!" in a pitying, half-caressing voice. The claim-agent hated himself for it, but fierce pangs of jealousy tore his heart at the sight and sound. Finally, oblivious of his presence, apparently, she said, quietly, solemnly almost, as if making a vow or taking an oath:

"We did not love each other, Henry, or, at least, I did not love you, and we were not happy together; but in all your grief you were true to me, and so I shall be to your memory."

The claim-agent thought again of

Miss Inez Lancy and her letters, and this time with even a grimmer feeling than before; but, as before, he said nothing.

As was only proper, the claim-agent devoted himself to his companion, until her departure. In spite of her marriage, she seemed to him as innocent and artless as she had been when he loved her as a girl. The intervening years were wiped out of the man's memory. He forgot everything but that he was in her presence again. For some men, only to look at the woman beloved is to drink the waters of Lethe. And, before they parted, the claim-agent spoke his heart.

"Amy," he said, "under any other circumstances, I should never have mentioned it now. But you are leaving in an hour. Our paths lie wide apart. I may never have another opportunity to speak to you. You have been separated from your—from Mr. Richardson for over five years, you said. You did not love him. I believe you once loved me. It seems horrible to speak of it now, but I want you to know that I care for no woman but you, that I never have nor ever shall. I love you more than I ever did; and if, after a while, you will take me, I shall devote my life to making you happy. I have been faithful all these years, and shall be to the end."

There was an acute though unintentional reproach in much that he said, and she winced under it; yet the depth of his passion, which could even forgive her own defection, moved her intensely. His plea was the more impressive because he made it so simply, with so much directness, with scarcely an alteration in the tones of his voice, even. Only his hand, lying on the table beside her, tightly clenched and trembling, betrayed his agitation. She answered him as simply and quietly as he had spoken.

"Frank," she said, "I cannot deny my own heart now; and especially in this solemn hour it seems that I should speak only the truth. Where Henry has gone," she went on, idealizing the dead man in a way that was

quite natural and to be expected, "there is all truth. I know, and even he would not care now. I never cared for him. I always loved you. It was because of that we separated. I made him very unhappy in his life. Something tells me he loved me to the end. He might have secured a divorce at any time, but he never did. And now he is dead. He probably died thinking of me, loving me. I owe him a long reparation, and I intend to make it. You heard what I said over his dead body. I mean it. My conscience hurts me when I think of what I made him suffer. Poor Henry!"

It was a strange and unusual situation indeed.

"You seem to care more for him dead than you ever did for him living?" questioned the claim-agent, sadly.

"Yes, perhaps I do," she answered, slowly. For the moment, she almost fancied she loved her husband. "And I am going to be faithful to his dead memory, too."

The luxury of being a martyr was already exercising its powerful fascination upon her. Yet she lifted her eyes to the face of the young man before her, and paused. He looked white and drawn and pained. He had risen, and both hands were tightly clasped now. At the sight of him, pity for him and love for him, fought with duty and martyrdom in her heart. She, too, rose and laid her hand tenderly on his breast.

"Don't grieve so, Frank," she said, softly. "I am not worth it"—and perhaps she was not, but when did that ever comfort or convince a lover?—"but so far as my heart goes it is yours; it always has been yours, it always will be yours. But marriage is not for me."

"Very well, Amy," said the claim-agent, seeing the futility of further appeal, and striving valiantly for his lost composure; "if the time ever does come, will you let me——?"

"It will never come!" she answered, firmly.

After she left him that night, the

claim-agent took out the package of letters, and went over them again. Yes, there was no doubt of it. Richardson was arranging to get a divorce, after which Miss Lancy evidently hoped and expected he would marry her, if the bad letters of a bad woman were to be accepted as evidence. So far from having been faithful and devoted to his wife, the letters proved that he had been untrue to her, that he hated her. Poor Amy, if she only knew what was in those letters! "Poor Henry!" And she thought him such a good man!

A terrible temptation seized the claim-agent as he thought over the situation. The woman he loved would be faithful to an ideal; but for that she would marry him, and he could make her so happy. The letters told all. He could shatter her ideal in an instant. It would be so easy to send the letters to her anonymously. He would never be suspected. The letters belonged to her, anyhow; she was the man's wife, and should succeed to his property. She had taken everything else belonging to him away with her; only these were left. They would open her eyes, indeed, if only they were sent to her. But the claim-agent could not do that. Richardson was dead and helpless now. He could not strike at a dead man. He could not win a woman's consent to marry him by such means as that, not even if he was sure she loved him, and he was sure he could make her very happy. No, there was nothing he could do.

The letters were sealed up in an envelope, and, with other unclaimed articles of value, were put in the claim-agent's safe for future disposition. He took up the round of life again bravely enough, but the recent meeting had thrown him back in feelings six years. He was just where he had been. It was all to do over again. It was all bitter hard on the claim-agent. Sometimes the hardest task that can be allotted to humanity is for a gentleman to remain a gentleman.

III

Six months after the Elwood wreck, the second vice-president of the road, who was also its general attorney and the head of its legal department—to whom, indeed, the claim-agent reported—sent for that young man.

Among the many suits which had been brought against the road growing out of the Elwood wreck, the most dangerous was that for one hundred thousand dollars for the death of Henry Richardson. The claim was supported by affidavits of his earning capacity, income, expectation of life, and so on, which made it most formidable and difficult to meet, and the best lawyer in the state was retained by the plaintiff, suit being entered in the name of the dead man's estate.

From the viewpoint of the road, the amount sued for was preposterous. In turn, they had offered to settle for five thousand dollars, but the proposition had been laughed to scorn by the attorney for the estate. How the suit was to be combated successfully did not appear to the general attorney, unless some pressure could be brought to bear on the plaintiff or his counsel.

The general attorney did not immediately disclose the state of affairs to his young subordinate, the claim-agent, who had only that morning returned from an extended trip over the lines, and the latter was in entire ignorance of the fact that the road had been sued for such an amount. Consequently, he was quite off his guard, and when the general attorney asked if he had not in his safe some incriminating letters or papers which had been found among the effects of the late Henry Richardson, he at once replied in the affirmative.

"Ah! I thought so!" exclaimed the hard-headed old veteran, a gleam of satisfaction overspreading his craggy countenance. "The superintendent told me about them; says they're bad indeed; quite ruin the dead man's reputation if published, and so on. Fetch them here at once, and let me have a look at them, please."

Now, there was no earthly reason why the general attorney should not look at the letters, yet the claim-agent felt exceedingly reluctant to put them in his possession. Yet, just because he really could think of no reason for refusing, he at last complied. A glance or two put the shrewd old lawyer in possession of their contents. He struck the bell on his desk, and, motioning to the claim-agent to remain, he bade the porter admit Judge McChesney. At that name, which was borne by the most distinguished lawyer in the state, unless it was the general attorney himself, the claim-agent started, but said nothing.

"Ah, good morning, judge," said the general attorney, briskly. "You wanted to see me once more about the Richardson case, I believe," referring to a note on the table. "Well, I have nothing to add to our previous offer of settlement."

"Which I have, once for all, emphatically declined," said the judge, firmly. "I am empowered, however, to settle for seventy-five thousand dollars, cash in hand. This is our lowest, I may say our final, proposition."

"Which I also unhesitatingly decline."

"And you will do nothing more than the paltry amount you have already offered?"

"Nothing more. Seventy-five thousand is a preposterous amount. No jury would ever award you a tithe of the sum."

"We'll chance that. The facts are plain, the evidence is clear and convincing, and we are quite ready, indeed, anxious, to go into court with you."

"You'll find us there when you are," said the general attorney, calmly.

"May I ask if this suit is brought for, or in behalf of, Mrs. Richardson, Judge McChesney?" interrupted the claim-agent, at this juncture.

"I don't mind telling you," answered the judge, after a reflective pause, "that she is only mentioned in the will,

given a pittance in the hope of avoiding a contest, I presume, though I've nothing to do with that. The suit is brought for the estate at the insistence of the deceased's father, who is also his executor. Now, Mr. General Attorney, if you have nothing further to say, we shall leave the decision of the case to the courts. I am sorry that we are unable to agree."

The judge hesitated a moment, arose and took his hat.

"Good morning, gentlemen," he said, turning toward the door.

"Oh, judge," said the general attorney, as if a thought had suddenly struck him, "a moment, please. Just cast your eye over that."

He detached a letter from the bundle of papers on the desk, and handed it to the judge. The latter fixed his eyeglasses on his nose, and scanned the paper, at first indifferently.

"What's this?" he said, with sudden interest. "Pah! What disgusting rot! What is it?"

"That," said the general attorney, nonchalantly, "is one of a bundle of letters addressed, as I learn from others in the package here, to Mr. Henry Richardson by one Inez Lancy, a woman whose reputation is as unsavory as her correspondence."

Judge McChesney removed his hat, and sat down once more.

"Are there others like it?" he asked.

He had quite made up his mind to destroy it then and there, if it were the only one in existence. The general attorney selected a second letter at random from the bunch, and passed it over. He knew quite well what was passing in the other man's mind. He would have done it himself, in like circumstances.

"Plenty," he answered. "You may retain those two, if you like, judge; they are samples of the rest. Each one worse than the others. We don't need 'em."

"And you propose——?"

"Excuse me, we propose nothing."

"Why, then——?"

"Oh, your client was such a fine fellow, we really wanted you to know

him. That stuff would make fine reading for his wife and family, to say nothing of the general public, wouldn't it?"

The claim-agent started at that, but neither of the two men was paying the slightest attention to him at that juncture. Judge McChesney threw the two letters down on the desk near the rest, while the general attorney gathered them carefully up. They were of no use to the judge unless he could get them all. The general attorney handed the completed packet to the claim-agent again, while the judge hemmed violently, and took off his eyeglasses and wiped them carefully.

"Such documents," he began, at last, "while highly distressing to friends and relatives, have no legal force in a case of this kind, you understand."

"My dear judge," said the general attorney, in a politely remonstrative voice, "legal force? I am surprised that you should think for a moment that we contemp—"

"Nonsense!" interrupted the judge, vehemently. "I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll settle for fifty thousand and—the letters."

"Five thousand," said the general attorney, persuasively.

"See you damned first!" retorted the judge, seizing his hat again.

As he did so, he cast a glance at the claim-agent. That young man was standing by the hard-coal fire glowing in the open grate—it was Midwinter now—looking intently down at a familiar package of papers blazing fiercely. The judge stopped again, as if petrified. The general attorney followed his opponent's gaze with a glance of his own. As he took in the situation, he sprang to his feet with an oath, and darted toward the fireplace.

"What's that?" he cried, furiously.

"Those letters," answered the claim-agent, resolutely. He was very pale, but quiet and determined.

"Did you—?" began the general attorney.

"I dropped them there," answered the claim-agent.

"Accidentally?"

The claim-agent shook his head.

"Designedly?"

The claim-agent bowed.

There was a moment of fearful silence. Judge McChesney broke it.

"You won't settle for seventy-five thousand, then? No? Well, good morning."

They could hear him laughing clear down the hall.

"Why in h—l did you do that?" roared the general attorney. He was furious with anger. "That was our best card. We'll be mulcted in terrific damages. That would have held him off. Why, sir, why?"

There was no answer.

The general attorney stared hard at the claim-agent for a little space, mastered his temper slowly, and spoke more quietly at last.

"This will cost the road a pretty penny, but it will also cost you something individually—your position. Sit down at that desk, and write out your resignation at once. I accept it in advance."

The claim-agent bowed, sat down, scribbled a few moments, blotted the paper, glanced over it, and tendered it to the general attorney.

"Very good," said that functionary, briefly. "Now go, sir, and the sooner the better."

"Before I go I have something to say on my own account," said the claim-agent, standing up very straight, and looking his superior in the eye. "I burned those letters because I would not be a party to any blackmailing scheme on the part of this road. Either we are liable for heavy damages, or we are not. I am not running this road, or its legal department, but I won't assist at any unfairness or chicanery. In the long run, I believe that even a railroad will make more and pay better by being strictly honest than by any sharp practices whatsoever. Those letters have no connection with this case, on its merits. To publish them or get them in as evidence, if it could have been done, would have brought disgrace on the man's wife and family, and it would have been bad policy, besides."

"What are the man's wife and family to you, sir?" coolly asked the general attorney, who was much interested in the speech of the claim-agent.

"His family, nothing; his wife, much. Since you ask about my private affairs, I'll tell you that I knew her when she was a young girl. I——"

"Oh!"

"Yes, sir, I was in love with her then, and I am now, and——"

"And you hope to win her by the story of this noble act on your part, do you?"

"I don't know how she is to find it out unless you tell her," returned the claim-agent, hotly. "She did not love her husband, and she did love me. They were separated ever since their marriage, into which she was forced by her parents. But she thinks she has wronged him by her indifference, and she believes he was faithful to her. She refused me again last Summer because she wishes to be faithful to his memory. I could have given her the letters then, and, by proving his unworthiness, perhaps I might have won her for myself."

"Why didn't you, then?"

"I could not."

"That's twice you have been a fool," said the older man, contemptuously, yet with a certain admiration in his mind for the other.

"Maybe, but I think I'd rather be a fool than a general attorney," answered the claim-agent, turning to go.

IV

It was not easy for him to get anything to do after his sudden and summary dismissal from the B. S. & W. road, but the claim-agent—claim-agent no longer—at last succeeded in securing a temporary appointment, pending something better, in one of the big corporations in Chicago. To him, a few weeks later, entered a messenger with a statement that there was a lady in the reception-room who desired to see him.

Amy Richardson met him on the threshold.

"Is there any place where we can be quite alone for a few moments without being interrupted?" she asked, as soon as she saw him, and before he had time to say a word even.

The president of the company was fortunately absent for the day, and, by permission of the manager, the agitated claim-agent led the woman he loved into the luxurious little private office, where they were as much alone as if they had been marooned on a desert island. She seated herself nervously in a large, capacious arm-chair, which her tiny figure by no means filled, while he stood erect before her. He noticed with a thrill of satisfaction that, while her perfect-fitting gown was dark in color and most unobtrusive in style, she was not in mourning. As for the rest, her cheeks were flushed and her eyes bright with—was it satisfaction, anticipation, or what? Again, he could not tell. Altogether she looked, he thought fatuously, even younger and sweeter than she had looked six years before. However, he only stared at her, saying nothing.

"Oh, do sit down, Frank," she began, at last. "It makes me nervous to see you standing there. That's better," she continued, as he obeyed her command. "That suit, you know, about my—about Mr. Richardson—" She paused. He nodded. "It was settled last week. Had you heard?"

"No."

"The plaintiff compromised for ten thousand dollars."

"I congratulate——"

"Hush! Do you think I would touch a penny of it, or of his money in any shape now? No; five thousand went to the estate and five thousand to——"

She paused again.

"Not to you?" asked the man.

"To a certain woman named Lancy!"

The murder was out, in spite of his efforts, then!

"I'm sorry you heard," he began, vaguely, feeling that he ought to say something, although, to be honest, he was not really sorry at all.

"And I am glad, glad!" she cried,

impetuously. "Oh, the low, mean, wretched woman! And I thought him so noble, so faithful, too."

"I'm sorry," said the claim-agent, vaguely, rising and coming toward her as he spoke.

He stopped by her chair, took her hand in his own, and she did not withdraw it. She turned away her head, too, but he could see the color mounting in her cheek, mark the rapid rise and fall of her breast. The man's heart, too, was beating rapidly. He scarce knew what he was doing.

"And I know about you, too," she went on, more softly, so that he had to bend very low over her to hear her. "Judge McChesney told me how noble and self-sacrificing you had been with those wretched letters."

"Did he say that?"

"Well, not exactly. He told me the facts, the words are my own."

"Thank you. It was nothing."

"It was the finest thing I ever heard. That woman filed a lien or something or other on the suit, you know, when she learned it was being brought; he had promised her money, and she had letters, his letters—I can imagine what hers were that you burned from those I saw. She was going to produce them in court, so Mr. Richardson's father compromised the suit, and she got half, as I said. No, don't interrupt me," she went on, hastily, as he strove to speak; "if I am stopped now I'll never be able to begin again. After I heard about it I went to your office to—to see you, and you were gone. They sent me in to the general attorney. They said he was an awfully

gruff man, but I found him a dear. He was nice to me, and he gave me your address. They kept track of you, you see, and I came right here and—and——"

She stopped, drew her hand away from him, hid her face and cowered down in the great chair before his steady gaze.

"Amy," he said, stooping quite low, and taking her in his arms, "does this mean that you will let me love you at last?"

"It means more than that," she whispered.

"Oh, Amy!" rapturously, "will you promise again to wait for me until I get a permanent position and am able to——?"

"I won't wait another minute, Frank!"

"Amy, what do you mean?"

"I've waited long enough. I—we——"

"Will you marry me now, Amy?"

"Whenever you like. This very minute!"

It was some time before any coherent conversation was possible or necessary, but when it was she drew back a little, saying:

"Oh, Frank, dearest, there is something else. The general attorney told me to tell you to come back; since the suit was settled, your old place was open for you with an increase of salary. I think he likes you."

"Hardly, but——"

"Wait, that isn't all yet. He told me to tell you, after seeing me, that you weren't such a—a—he swore awfully—fool, after all!"



TWO SIDES OF THE QUESTION

"WHY doesn't he marry?"
 "He doesn't approve of divorce."

WASTED

SHE used to stand and look at her face till her blood ran swiftly and warm;
 She used to lie and cover her face, and sob on her listless arm,

In weariness of the days that came, and wrath at the days that went,
 And left her beauty, and left her breath, and left her the twain unspent.

And each red morning that rose for her, "A day of my youth," she said;
 And each red evening that closed on her, "A day of my youth is dead."

What fate for the beautiful, hidden thing, more cruel than that which swept
 Death's sudden mantle across her face, and blotted it while she slept?

So a gem, calcined in its black earth crust no man ever broke apart,
 By some wild white flame struck suddenly straight up from the earth's black
 heart,

Resolved unfound, unadored, unsung, to nothingness and to night,
 Never to lie on a woman's breast, or blaze for a king's delight;

Or stars that rise to waterless worlds, know something of her despair,
 Who never looked in the eyes of love for her fair face mirroring there.

FANNY KEMBLE JOHNSON.



THE TROUBLE IN THE CASE

THE SPENDTHRIFT—You can't expect me to be just the same as you
 were at my age. You ought to make allowances.
 HIS FATHER—I do, but the allowances are always exceeded.



A REJECTED RECIPE

EDITH—Just think! Here's a New Thought professor who teaches that one
 can become beautiful by persistently thinking herself beautiful.
 IRENE—Oh, pshaw! We could point out so many instances to the contrary.

WHEN POVERTY KNOCKS

By Elizabeth Knight Tompkins

IT was not until the night of the seventeenth of November that George Austin faced the truth. Then, for the first time, he acknowledged to himself that he was definitely contemplating an act which he never for one moment ceased to consider dishonorable. Up to that time, he had persistently refused to believe in the possibility of his asking a woman to marry him for the sake of the worldly goods, the superabundance of worldly goods, that was hers.

The day had begun badly in the Harlem flat that was called home by himself, his young sister and brother, and his little daughter, Gertrude. Breakfast had been half-cooked; Maggie, the maid-of-all-work, even more untidy than usual; little Gertrude had come to the table with her clothes on wrong side out, her face unwashed, and her hair uncombed from the day before; Rolf was sulky, and Amy did not appear at all. It was a relief to George to remember that he would not be home to dinner, a relief tempered by anxiety about little Gertrude. He knew that the child was neglected, that neither Amy nor Maggie was to be trusted to look out for her, and her dirty little face often thrust itself between him and his work. What was to become of her?

The day was a hard one, spent chiefly in the tactful combating of the crude, bizarre ideas of a wealthy client. George longed alternately to throw up the job, and to let the man build his house to suit himself; but the thought of his unpaid bills urged him to greater concessions, at the same time that his conscience protested. He called the

protesting voice his conscience, though he recognized it for his vanity, knowing that if he could have built this house anonymously, he would have pocketed his commission, and erected any monstrosity whatever, so far from his ideals had it made him fall, this eternal preoccupation with ways and means.

He dressed at his office after closing time, not being able to afford a club, and took a car up-town. It was a little early, and he had Miss Hume to himself for ten minutes before the other guests arrived, a pleasant ten minutes that calmed his nerves, and made him forget his many anxieties. The atmosphere of the house was soothing to him always. Its furnishings pleased his fastidious taste; its quiet luxuriousness, which aimed at comfort rather than splendor, as well as the absence of superfluous adornment, was in accord with his theories. The open fires, the odor of violets and roses, the noiseless service, the delicious dinner, appealed to him so strongly that life without these accessories seemed no longer endurable. No sacrifice was too great to attain them. The guests were people whose names he had always known; they stimulated him to appear at his best. He had never before been so thoroughly master of his ideas; they marshaled themselves at his bidding, and showed themselves strong and invulnerable. The other men—there were three of them—were older than he, one a skilled veteran in his own profession; but they drew him out, and encouraged him to talk. All the time, though she spoke little, less than was her custom, he

was conscious of the woman at the head of the table. Without a betraying look or a sign from her, he knew that she was triumphing in his little triumph, that she was proud of the man she had chosen to honor with her love, she the unattainable, "the topmost apple on the very end of the bough."

He often wondered if she knew how plainly she had told him her secret that day, a month or so before, when the elevator in the Burton building had dropped with them. She had been her calm, unmoved self the next time they met, and never by word or look since had she shown any consciousness of her self-betrayal. There had been no change in her manner to him; she had not even modified its frank friendliness with a shade of distance.

As for himself, he had never been so near loving her as on this evening. The perversity of it that he could not! He remembered how easily he had cared for Gertrude, his dead wife. He had not seen her half-a-dozen times before he was overwhelmingly in love with her; and yet, as he discovered before they had been married six months, there had been nothing there to love except a pretty face and a certain magnetism of manner, born entirely of the flesh.

With Frances Hume, on the other hand, there was everything to love. He admired and liked her better than any other woman he had known, but his feeling stopped obstinately at liking and admiration. There was something about her that chilled him, an impersonality, a practicality—he called it by various names. They were extremely congenial; hours slipped by like minutes when they were discussing her various projects for the better housing of the poor and the disposing of her millions so that they should do more good than harm. They could talk endlessly on books, pictures, music, the problems of life and death, or religion, science, politics. If, however, the personal note chanced to be struck, constraint took the place of ease, both becoming self-conscious and stiff.

When George first knew her, he had

attributed this transformation to pride—pride of wealth and family. She would give of her intellect, but not of herself, to her paid architect, a man of neither means nor ancestry. Later on, he found himself forced to give up this theory. Whatever she might be to other men, in her attitude to him there was no pride, rather a sweet humility. It was wonderful how little spoiled she was, for all her wealth. She did not appear to take either herself or it seriously. Knowing its value perfectly, both absolutely and in its effect on other people, she was not elated by its possession. The only visible effect of it was a certain cynicism in regard to the motives of people in general; but this she seemed to desire to hide rather than to parade. Once she had said to George: "I have to be so careful not to misjudge people; it is so easy in a position like mine"—one of the few allusions to her wealth he had heard her make, other than to express her feeling of responsibility about a worthy use of it.

It was two years since he had made Miss Hume's acquaintance. She had sent for him, attracted by an idea he had for a tenement-house-plan competition which she had inspired. He did not receive the prize, owing to certain defects in his design. These Miss Hume saw the way to remedy. Her practicality, her grasp of detail, her wide knowledge of the conditions of life among the poor, amazed him. It was hard to believe that she had not had a personal knowledge of the devices and restrictions of poverty. Together, they had built the series of tenement-houses that replaced the hideous mockeries of homes in the East Side block which she had bought out of the accumulations of her income. They had spent hours together, both in the slums and in her luxurious home; they had taken journeys to see other buildings. They had talked continually; yet never but once had the veil between them fallen. Then she had clung to him; he had looked in her eyes, and known that she loved him. He had not suspected it before, though

he had often speculated about the nature of her feeling toward himself. Could there possibly be anything warmer hidden behind that frank, impersonal friendliness? He had always decided that it was impossible, wondering at it a little, if the truth must be acknowledged, for he had ever found women quick to love.

And now, this night, as he took his way home, he cursed the fate that had made him so insensible. Had he at his age already exhausted his capacity of loving? Or was it possible that he, fine as he had always believed himself to be, was really of the great majority whose love can be reached only through the one channel? This last supposition disquieted him. He had never loved a truly fine woman, but had always believed in his capacity for so doing. It was the fine women that had been lacking. That he had always been attracted by the slighter thing had been due to accident. But now Frances Hume was all that a man could ask a woman to be. Were the traps for the senses really a necessary part of it?

He shook the thought from him impatiently as he let himself into his flat. An odor of stale cauliflower met him. The gas flared high in the hall, lighting up the dirt on the floor. With a shiver of impatience, he turned it out, and went down the hall to an open door, out of which light was also streaming. Three jets of gas were blazing, but the room was empty except for a little figure asleep in a crib in the corner. The bedclothes were half off; the child's fat legs were uncovered and blue with cold; the cheek that showed was smeared with some sticky stuff; the hair was a tangled mass, and the little hands were black. George sighed wearily as he pulled the clothes up, his face softening as he looked at his little daughter, charming in spite of her lack of care. There was no need to question his love for his only child. It was the test, the infallible test, of his coldness toward the woman who occupied so large a share of his thoughts.

He looked about the room. Amy

had evidently gone out in a hurry. Garments were on the floor just as she had stepped out of them. The bed, still unmade, was covered with clothes that had evidently been tried on and rejected. The bureau was littered with a mass of ribbons and laces, more or less soiled; a pair of curling-tongs lay on top of them, and the floor beside the bureau was strewn with bits of blackened newspaper. George picked up a disreputable slipper, but dropped it again as his eyes traveled on about the room. The attempt was hopeless.

It was not only the confusion that made his face darken. He knew where Amy had gone, and remembered for the first time that, in his preoccupation, he had forgotten to request her to refuse the invitation, as he had intended to do when he accidentally learned of it. He disliked the people, and, besides, Amy was far too young to go to parties at all. What would become of her with her pretty face and her intense eagerness for pleasure if some change were not made in their way of life? He put out the lights, and went on to his own room, a little more habitable than the rest of the house, and sat down to smoke and wait for Amy. One of the young men of the family would probably bring her home, and hereafter he would see that some one was mindful of her comings and goings.

George wrapped himself in the comforter off his bed, and sat there thinking, acknowledging to himself openly for the first time his intention of asking Frances Hume to marry him. His thoughts ran on his little sister, for whom he had been able to do so little in spite of his wish to do all things. With her adaptability, what might she not become under Frances's influence, in the new surroundings that would be devised for her? She should go to school—she was only sixteen—and her quickness of perception should be turned to some account. She did not care for her present associates; it was only the intensity of the life that was in her that

made her snatch at the one distraction within her reach rather than endure the unrelieved hideousness of life in a Harlem flat. And Rolf, too, should have his wish and go to college, to study to be an electrical engineer. There was no doubt of his ability if he had a chance to develop it. On him also the influence of Frances's personality would be incalculably great. While as for little Gertrude, what could not be made of her in the proper environment?

An ugly thought broke in upon his happy reverie. In all the hours he and Frances had been together, he had never once had the desire to caress her. He would have to feign that desire now, assume an ardor he did not feel; the idea was horrible. If only he could go to her, like an honest highwayman, and demand her money!

Amy's arrival broke in upon these meditations. Though inwardly longing to kick him down-stairs for the sham gentility of him, George was polite to her escort. To Amy herself he said a few words expressing his disapproval of her associates and his disgust at her neglect of Gertrude. Amy did not defend herself, a certain frankness in regard to her own shortcomings being one of her virtues. Besides, like the rest of the household, she was a little in awe of her brother when he really asserted his authority. This he did not do often, being too ready to make excuses for people whose lives were so irredeemably ugly.

One evening, a week later, he rang the bell of Frances Hume's house on the pretext of some plans to show her, but in reality determined that he would not leave the house with the momentous words unsaid. Never once during the week had his determination wavered, but, nevertheless, he dreaded the ordeal to the extent of cold shivers up and down his spine. He had decided on a plan of action. He would let her talk impersonalities, with little or no response, until her curiosity was aroused at his silence. Then he would turn the conversation to personalities, to the relations of herself and himself,

and keep it there, regardless of any attempts to divert it. No doubt she would cease to struggle when she realized his determination. He was prepared to have her refuse him, but that she would persist in her refusal he did not believe. That which was hidden in her heart would be a powerful ally. Nevertheless, though he felt confident of the issue, the process must be necessarily a disagreeable one.

Frances was in the library. To his surprise, she came forward eagerly to greet him as soon as the servant had withdrawn.

"Oh, I am so glad!" she exclaimed, with an abandon that he had never seen in her before. "I have been wanting to see you for two days. Indeed, I almost telephoned to you this afternoon."

"Why didn't you?" he asked, holding her hand some seconds longer than he had ever done before. To his further surprise, she let it linger in his. Was the ordeal to be made easier for him?

"Oh, I don't know. Perhaps I had a presentiment that you would come anyway. Do sit down here by the fire; your hands are so cold! You like this chair, I know."

George looked at her in amazement. He had never seen her like this before. After the first sensation of pleasure, of relief, he felt a sudden vague terror. What could it mean? He took the chair she pointed out to him, while he asked, with outward composure:

"What is it?"

"I have something to tell you. I must tell somebody. I have made such a strange discovery."

"Evidently it is a pleasant one, whatever it is," he responded.

Frances laughed a gay, unrestrained laugh. For the first time, he realized that he had almost never heard her laugh, and the thought flashed into his mind that perhaps the reason he had not loved her was because they had never laughed together.

"Well, some people would hardly call it so. I have lost all my money!" she returned, gaily. At this unlikely

point, she laughed again. "Don't think me crazy," she protested; "it is really true."

"And you are *glad*?" he demanded, in an incredulous, awe-struck tone.

"God help me, I believe I am!" she returned, fervently. "I feel as if a millstone had fallen from my neck. No doubt I shall realize what I have lost soon enough, but at present I feel only relief. Now I can be a woman, not merely an heiress."

The thought passed through George's brain: "How fortunate that I have not committed myself by word or look!" to be followed immediately by the doubt: "Is it really so fortunate?"

The woman opposite him seemed all at once supremely worthy to be won for her own sake. The impassiveness, the impersonality, that had chilled him had fallen, like a cloak, from her shoulders.

"How can it be?" he demanded. "How could such a fortune be lost in a night? The thing is impossible."

"It is not the fortune that is lost, but my title to it," she explained. "Here, read this." She took a little book from the table, and put it into his hands, open at a certain page. George looked at the book before he read what was written. It was small, bound in shiny black leather, which, on one of the covers, was prolonged into a flap that fastened in a slit on the other cover. The edges were gilt; there was no lettering on the back. Within, the book was half full of a minute, legible writing.

"It is Uncle Guerdon's diary," Frances explained.

On the page that was open, George read a date and these words:

"This day I married Selina Butterworth at the old Methodist Church. I suppose I am a fool; but she has promised secrecy, and will not dare to break her word. I shall have to acknowledge the child some day, if it lives—there is no possible doubt of its being mine; but I cannot put Selina in my mother's place. This affair has been the curse of my life, but shake myself loose from it I cannot."

The whole story was clear to George as he read. Like every one else, he

had always known the circumstances under which Frances, then a small child, had inherited the vast estate of her uncle, Guerdon Hume, she being the only heir after the court had refused to recognize the claims of a reputed son.

"And so she was his wife, after all," Frances began when he raised his eyes. "I supposed you could always prove things that were really true, but it seems I was mistaken. You see, this Mrs. Butterworth's character was bad, and the witnesses to the marriage were dead. Mr. Hastings has always said that the boy looked like Uncle Guerdon. He believed that he was his son, but not that Uncle Guerdon had married his mother. We have paid them a large allowance on the strength of the resemblance. It is a great comfort to me to know that they have not lacked even the luxuries of life. Still, it will be a tremendous change for them—and for me, too," she added.

"Then you won't contest?" he asked. Frances only laughed for answer. "I should think you were really entitled to part of the estate," he continued.

"The money is not mine," she replied, with decision. "I am not sure that I want any," she went on. "You can't imagine what I have suffered because of this money of mine. Listen to me, George Austin. I want to talk. I want to say some few of the things that I have choked down all these years." She rose, and put out all the lights but one, then came back to her place before the glowing fire.

"I am not used to talking about what I really feel," she explained. She leaned forward in her chair, and looked at him, her eyes bright with excitement. "I have been stifled by it, my real self has been stifled," she began. "I have never dared let myself go because I learned early what the consequences were. If I gave of myself to a woman, I soon found that she was calculating the use she could put me to; if to a man, that he asked me to marry him. The best people are frightened away from the neighborhood of great wealth; they will not class

themselves with those who toady and flatter. Of course, I know the power of money, the satisfaction it brings; but the price one pays for it is too great. I never really wanted but one thing in my life, the one thing which every true woman wants in her heart, lacking which her life is dust and ashes, and this was precisely the one thing I could never have. It has been so dreadful, always to see the lust for my wealth in men's eyes when they looked at me."

George bowed his head and kept silent. Frances went on, in a different tone of voice: "You don't know what a comfort your friendship has been to me. It has been unspeakably delightful to meet one man who was evidently without designs. It has even, in a sense, pleased me that I did not attract you personally, to see that your eyes were not dazzled; for many men, you know, confound me with my possessions. They try to make me believe it is myself that is the magnet. Perhaps they even deceive themselves into thinking so. But you have never pretended to care for me, except as a congenial mind. I might have been a man, for all I have moved you."

She rose from her chair, and stood there in front of the fire, stretching out her arms beside her and drawing a long breath. "And now I am free!" she exclaimed. "If a man looks at me with love in his eyes, I shall know that it is for me. And men will look at me so. I am a woman for men to love, now that I am no longer oppressed by my gold and squeezed for defense into a personality that is not mine. Oh, the poor, cold, self-repressed creature I have taught myself to be! And yet, do you know, I wonder that I can throw off my shell so easily! I thought I should have to learn to let myself go."

George rose to his feet. "I don't know what to make of you," he said, still looking into the fire instead of meeting her eyes. "You dazzle me more than your wealth ever did. I must go."

She took his outstretched hand in both hers with an impulsive gesture that added to the unreality of the scene for him. He could not believe that this unrestrained, glowing woman was the self-contained Miss Hume he had believed himself to know so well.

"Don't go," she entreated. "I haven't said half I wanted to. You ought to be patient with me, for, you know, I have never before talked to you of myself."

"Indeed, you have not. Still, I must go."

"But you will come again. Come to-morrow. I don't know any one but you that I care to talk to about this thing, and I must talk to somebody."

"Yes, I will come to-morrow," he answered, mechanically, his one thought being to get away. Nevertheless, when he reached the door, he stopped and asked: "When are you going to begin proceedings?"

"Not till Mr. Hastings gets back, of course; and that won't be till after New Year's. Until then, I shall let everything go on as usual. The turning things over will be a quick and simple matter, as, of course, there will be no contest of any kind."

George still felt dazed when he awoke the next morning. His sensations were so indescribably mingled that he soon gave up trying to analyze them. A vast shame of himself was upon him. The telling Frances the truth confronted him as a necessity, filling him with a terror greater than was justified by the prospect of an unpleasant quarter-of-an-hour. Now that he knew how high she had placed him, he could not bear the thought of stepping down. And yet he could not go to her and listen to her confidences with this untold between them. He could not make up his mind to go to her house, so he sent an excuse, pleading a rush of business.

The next Saturday, Maggie asked permission to go to a funeral in the afternoon. Amy was dismayed. She had made an engagement, and could

not stay at home to take care of Gertrude.

"I don't see why Rolf can't," she protested, fretfully; but Rolf was going to a football game, and declined to change his plans. "Then I don't see why she can't play around as the other children do. I know Mrs. Thompson would keep an eye on her if we asked her to, and it's nice and warm to-day."

"I don't choose to have my child run loose in the streets," George answered, curtly. "I shall come home myself, and take her out to Bronx Park." His heart sank as he remembered that there would now be no end to these complications and discussions.

On his way home that noon, he met Frances Hume on Twenty-third street. He would have passed her with a bow, but she stopped him.

"Where are you going in such a hurry?" she demanded. George told her.

"Let me go, too," she suggested. "I have been longing to break a stupid engagement for this afternoon. Do let me. I want so much to know Gertrude."

"I am sure we shall be very much honored," he returned, politely, not knowing whether he wanted her to come or not. A meeting place was agreed upon.

Amy and Rolf had already gone. George ate some scraps of their early luncheon while Maggie cleared the table and got herself ready to go, in a state of wild excitement at the prospect of the pleasure before her. Neither she nor Amy had thought of dressing Gertrude, but, fortunately, George was used to doing it himself. Amy's one usefulness was in the matter of dress-making, for which she had a decided talent, so the child had pretty and suitable clothes to wear. Frances made friends with Gertrude the moment they met.

"I have always wanted to ask you to bring her to see me," she explained to George. "But, you see, I have grown out of the habit of taking

notice of children. I love them so dearly that I could not bear to see that presents were expected to follow friendliness."

George had never talked to her of his financial and domestic difficulties, fearing the appearance of asking help, but to-day they slipped into the subject. Frances readjusted the fastenings of Gertrude's coat, and George explained that he had not understood them.

"Can you put on her out-door things?" Frances asked, with interest.

"I can do more than that," he boasted.

"Farver washed and dressed me all himself," Gertrude explained, gravely.

"Really!" exclaimed Frances, smiling at him, a smile that seemed to go straight from her heart to his, while the tears were not far from her eyes, so great is the pathos of a man doing a woman's work.

They were sitting on a bench, resting, and before he realized what he was doing, he was telling her all his troubles. Gertrude had left them, and was playing near by. She was used to finding amusement for herself. Frances was so sympathetic and interested and her questions were so to the point that before long she had the whole story, of his father's debts that he was trying to pay, of the problem of making his income cover his expenses, of the difficulties in the way of Rolf's education and of doing anything for Amy, of his anxieties about Gertrude.

"There must be great waste somewhere," Frances returned, at length. "You make money enough for a comfortable home, and you spend almost nothing on yourself. I knew that you were worried about money matters," she continued, "and I often wished you would talk to me about them, but I couldn't begin it."

She demanded a pencil and the back of an envelope, requested information about his household expenses, and in a few minutes proved to him that his present embarrassment was entirely unnecessary. George replied that no

doubt it was true, but how to prevent it was quite a different thing. He spoke with a suggestion of impatience in his voice, getting up and walking away on the pretext of looking after Gertrude. He could not stay there and leave unuttered the words that were on his lips—a second insult. Was he to ask this woman to be his housekeeper?

Frances's manner had changed when he returned. There was a suggestion of the grand lady in it. No one would have suspected her of an intimate knowledge of household affairs. She kept him at a distance, but she no longer concealed the fact that this distant self was a flesh-and-blood woman. She left him under a more powerful spell than any her gold had ever worked.

In the weeks that followed, he could not keep away from her. He was unutterably miserable; but now his doubts were all of her. For the first time, he questioned his reading of her eyes on that memorable occasion in the elevator. What her plans were for the future after the exodus, she refused to tell. The only fact he was sure of was that she intended to give up everything. In the meanwhile, things went on at her house just as usual.

"They can't begin to spend the money, so why should I save it for them?" she explained to George, on the occasion of a dinner-party to a visiting celebrity. Indeed, as the newspapers remarked, Miss Hume had never entertained so much as she did this Winter. To almost all her festivities, George was bidden. His knowledge of her secret seemed to bring him close to her, although, as often happened, they hardly exchanged a word. He rarely saw her alone. He tried to be cynical about the men that crowded around her, fancying the disorderly retreat they would beat if the truth were made known, but, for the life of him, he could not accomplish it. With the best will in the world to believe ill of his fellow-men, he could not help realizing that the charm of the woman must be as powerful with others as with himself. He

gave no thought to the new responsibilities that he would take on his shoulders if she consented to marry him. Even Harlem flats and stale cauliflower would be tolerable with her to share them. He ceased to think about her executive ability. It was the woman he wanted, not the housekeeper.

With her, he always found himself constrained these days, his doubts and the secret which he could not bring himself to confess taking away his old ease of manner. She herself was, however, perfectly at her ease. She revealed new charms every time she spoke to him. His change of manner did not seem to attract her attention. She often had an inscrutable little look in her eyes over which he wondered. Could it be triumph? Was she triumphing over him because he was now in the position in which she had been—if, indeed, she had ever really been there? What a vain ass he had been to suppose such a thing!

His freedom of the Hume household brought him desirable invitations from other sources. These he accepted or declined, according to his knowledge of Frances's movements. On New Year's Eve he met her at a big party.

"My last," she explained, as she passed him on the stairs.

He did not seek to approach her, but stood against a door-post, jealously watching the attention she received. Certainly, her manner had changed. It was not to him alone that she now revealed herself. If he could have brought himself to speak her name, he would have liked to find out from other men whether the, to him, complete transformation was a fact to them. At all events, she had never been so surrounded as to-night.

The sight was so painful that he soon left the house, and walked on up Fifth avenue. It was very cold, but he hardly felt it, walking on and on in a preoccupation that took no notice of outward conditions. At last, he was aroused by the stopping of a carriage at the curb beside him. He looked up, and saw that he was in front of the Hume house, and that Frances

herself was getting out of the carriage. She spoke his name.

"Did you walk 'way up here?" she asked.

"Yes; at least, I suppose I did. I certainly didn't ride," he answered. "But how did you happen to come away so soon? I did not suppose you would leave for hours."

"Mrs. Bromley had a headache—I have just left her at her house, and I was quite ready to go. I thought I'd rather see the New Year in in my own library than in a crowd."

"And may I see it in with you?" His voice was not quite steady as he put this question, knowing that on its answer his fate depended. Frances Hume was not a woman who appeared to lay much stress on conventions; but, still, she had lived too much in the world not to realize the necessity of conforming to certain rules. George knew that she would not let him pay her a visit in the middle of the night, with all her household in bed, unless she were willing to go farther—all the way, in fact. His heart stood still during the moment she hesitated. When she did speak, however, her voice was unmoved.

"Yes, I should like to have you."

When he joined her in the library after leaving his coat in the hall, she had thrown aside her wraps, and was standing by the fire in her beautiful gown, with diamonds on her neck and in her hair. George went straight up to her.

"I have something to tell you," he began, with decision. "I cannot let you begin the New Year without knowing it. Do you know what I came to your house for that night you showed me your uncle's diary?" To his surprise, her eyes met his with comprehension in them.

"Yes, I know. I knew that night; I had known for some time," she answered.

"And you said that you had trusted me!"

"Yes; that was my revenge."

George laid his arms on the mantelpiece, and buried his face in them.

Frances came up beside him, and laid her hand on his shoulder.

"Can't you forgive me?" she asked.

"Forgive you!" he murmured.

Her voice sank to a whisper as she said: "I knew, too, what made you think it was justifiable. I have not been as oblivious as I have seemed."

George raised his head. "It was not justifiable; nothing could make it so. I am weighed down with shame. Can you ever forgive me?"

"You have taken the only possible way to make me—if I am not mistaken." She added these last words tremulously.

"No; you are not mistaken," he returned, firmly, looking her straight in the eyes. Then he began to plead. "Surely I have been punished enough; surely it is sufficient atonement to suffer the torments that I have endured the past six weeks. Give me a word of hope. I don't dare approach you. I am not worthy. Of your mercy, I ask it."

She looked at him with tears in her eyes and a dawning smile, holding out both hands to him. "The worst of it was that I always knew I could make you love me if the old thing had not been between us," she whispered.

"Do you really think you can stand Harlem, or its equivalent?" he asked, a quarter-of-an-hour later.

"I don't intend to try," she answered, with an inscrutable smile.

"Don't you intend to reside with me, then?" He returned her smile without understanding it.

"Yes; but I am going to live in Gramercy Park."

"But to live in Gramercy Park takes money."

Frances began to laugh. "I have another sin to confess," she answered. "I don't mean my abdication to be as complete as I pretended. I see no reason why I am not entitled to the same allowance from the estate as I made Mrs. Butterworth of my own free will. And there is an old house in Gramercy Park which I shall ask for.

I am sure Mr. Hastings can arrange it for me."

"I suppose I ought to protest, but I admit that I am relieved," George replied. "But are you sure you will never suspect me of mercenary motives?"

Frances laughed a triumphant

laugh. "I don't think I am going to be troubled with doubts as to your reason for marrying me," she replied. She lifted her hand for silence. The clock was striking twelve, and the bells were beginning to ring in the New Year that was bringing life's best happiness to them both.



ON KISSING

THE Hero who first discovered the kiss, like the one who first ate an oyster, is unknown to fame.

Were he known, his statue would overshadow every altar. It would be in every shady glen, on every sea-shore and in every park, and no home would be complete without it.

The kiss is the only thing known whose life is absolutely perfect bliss, without a single flaw from beginning to end. Although immortal, yet it dies as soon as it is born. A kiss that springs from virgin lips is fresh with the innocence of youth and yet heavy with the lapse of ages.

A kiss is the calling card of the heart. Where two hearts meet, they send out their kisses ahead as union advance agents.

Maxim—*No one knows what a kiss will bring forth. A kiss in time makes nine.*

From the cradle to the grave, there is no period when the kiss is really unpopular. It is love's medium of exchange of many values, but subject to no clearing-house, and is not transferable, except in certain cases of domestic infelicity. It has never been successfully counterfeited except by two women, but this does no harm, as the two parties in the transaction always know and recognize the counterfeit.

A kiss, though sometimes heard, is never seen. It is not valid at banks, on railroad trains or horse-cars, and is unknown in financial centres or the business world. Yet it has changed the course of history, sent nations to war, made kings totter on their thrones, and countless thousands mourn.

Maxim—*Man is born to kisses as the sparks fly upward. One good kiss deserves another. The widow's might is oftentimes in her kiss.*



ABOUT THE SIZE OF HIM

"PA, what is a model man?"

"A model man, my son, is generally a very small sample copy, or facsimile, of a real man, and is usually made of putty."

THE MOPER

By Arthur Macy

THE Moper mopeth all the day;
He mopeth eke at night;
And never is the Moper gay,
But, grim and serious alway,
He is a sorry sight.

He liketh not the merry quip;
He hateth other men;
Escheweth he companionship,
Nor doth he e'er essay to trip
The light fantastic ten.

He seeketh not where murm'ring brooks
With rippling music flow;
He seeth naught in woman's looks,
And never readeth he in books
Except they tell of woe.

He e'en forgetteth that the sun,
Likewise God's balmy air,
Were made to gladden every one;
But he preferreth both to shun,
And taketh not his share.

He careth not for merry wights
Who drink Château Yquem,
But he would set the world to rights
By peopling it with eremites—
And very few of them.

When children sport with merry glee,
He thinketh they are wild,
And with them doth so disagree
It seemeth verily that he
Hath never been a child.

He thinketh that it is not right
Rare dishes to discuss,
And knoweth not the keen delight
Of one that hath an appetite
Yclepèd ravenous.

Of goodly raiment he hath none—
 He calleth it "display;"
 Wherefore, the urchin poketh fun,
 Because he looketh like that one
 Unholy men call "jay."

And so we see this foolish man
 All pleasant things doth scorn.
 Good folk, pray God to change His plan,
 And cheer the Moper if He can,
 Or let no more be born!



HIS VICTORY

"I UNDERSTOOD you to say that you reject me," he said.
 "Your understanding is correct," she replied, "although somewhat blunt.
 I feel that I cannot marry you."

She took a step forward, and gently touched his arm. A tear was in her eye.

"I'm so sorry," she said.

Something in her voice made him straighten up. He had not asked for sympathy. He resented it so suddenly that it was as if some outside power had taken possession of him. He felt mad right through.

"You needn't be," he replied. "Why should you be? If you entertain the slightest notion that I'm going to jump off the dock or ruin my life, dismiss it at once. There are, I can assure you, worse things than being a bachelor. In the first place, there are no enormous bills to pay. Then, a man can go and come as he pleases, without let or hindrance. Instead of being bound down to one woman, subject to her whims, her idle fancies, he is free for all. He can pursue his cherished ambitions without interruption. When he is sick, he can secure proper care without being nursed by an amateur. He doesn't have to attend dinner-parties, or any other kind of parties, if he doesn't want to. His time is his own. He can smoke and drink or not, without question, and he is absolutely free to pursue his own ideals. There are worse things than being single. I was willing to run the risk, with you, but don't sympathize with me. I shall get along all right, thank you. I——"

She turned toward him with a sudden movement of determination, and held out her hands, pleadingly.

"Now you *must* marry me!" she said.



THE stern New England father turned his daughter into the street.
 "The reporters won't get any scare-head out of this," he chuckled. "It was Wall street, and I gave her a tip on the market."

Whereupon, he smiled to think how he had upset tradition.

THE MAXIMS OF METHUSELAH

BEING THE ADVICE GIVEN BY THE PATRIARCH IN HIS NINE HUNDRED, SIXTY AND NINTH YEAR, TO HIS GREAT-GRANDSON, SHEM, IN REGARD TO WOMEN

By Gelett Burgess

MY son, beware of the wiles of women and curb thy vanity, for by that door she entereth in to destroy thee. Out of the words of thy mouth shall she bring thee low.

2 I have watched her at her work in the cozy-corner, when she said: Lo, *for an hour* have I made him to talk of himself; till he thinketh he is the best ever;

3 Now shall I fall upon him *and devour him*; he shall do my bidding, for I have got him going.

4 He shall tell me his inmost thought, and all that *she* hath said regarding me. In my sleeve shall be heard the tinkling of silvery laughter; *he shall* send me flowers,

5 Precious confections and gloves and pins of fine gold, theatre tickets and *much* cabfare.

6 Yet her ways are those of the ways with a child; she feedeth his pride and nourisheth it, and he groweth fat; his chest protrudeth withal.

7 Yet a silent man affrighteth her; yea, she is astonished at him. She stumbleth and falleth down; there is no way to work him.

8 ¶ I knew a man of Cush, and he married a wife. She was a shrew, she complained much; yet did he subdue her.

9 She railed continually, saying: Behold, thou hast come in *late*, and I am lonely; *long* have I awaited thee.

10 And he said: *Yes'm*.

11 So was her tongue broken against him, and there was peace in his house.

12 ¶ My son, obey the law, and ob-

serve prudence. When thou takest a maid, take thou a chaperon, also, that thou mayest flirt *with her*, unafraid.

13 If thou hast called on her three Thursdays, take heed and *avoid the fourth*; make thy call Tuesday, lest she thinketh she knoweth all thy ways. Bore her not with regularity; let her not expect thee alway.

14 Hast thou given a first kiss to a virgin? Write her speedily on the morrow *before she sendeth thee* fierce words; assure her, and comfort her woe; let her remorse be abated,

15 Lest she say: Lo, I have spent the night in tears, thinking of my shame. Sleep would not come nigh unto me; I marveled *what thou shouldst think of me*; my sorrow is great.

16 ¶ Listen, and hear my counsel; hearken to my precept. For the maidens of the land of Nod are known unto me, and the damsels of Uz are as rings on my hand.

17 Teach thy son to love a married woman with his *first* love, for he shall know much and come to no harm. She shall teach him, and he shall learn *divers things*; he shall amuse her and she shall train him in the way of women *without entanglement*.

18 Yet if he falleth enamoured of a virgin, surfeit him with her presence. He shall peradventure fall aweary and learn discrimination.

19 ¶ Verily men do foolish things, thoughtlessly, knowing not why; but no woman doeth anything *without a reason*. Search her acts and learn of her follies.

20 Explain not *machinery* to her; on politics shalt thou keep thy mouth shut.

21 For she hath curiosity but of one thing, which is love.

22 She writeth in the *magazines*, she composeth verses; yea, she scribbleth *much*. Yet she publisheth only her own affairs and the affairs of her friends. Imagination is not in her; she layeth her hand to her heart and *exposeth* it.

23 ¶ My son, a woman shall come to thee, saying: Harken not unto the words of thy great-grandfather, for he doteth; he maketh merry with women, comprehending nothing. He sayeth so-and-so concerning us:

24 But *how about men?* Is it not even true of *them*, also?

25 Then shalt thou know that she lacketh humor. She floateth in her own folly, she is blind; *do not discuss* with her. Kiss her patiently, and praise her hair.

26 For a woman without humor is an annoyance; she is as the touch of wet velvet, or a mouse nibbling in the night; she is a cigar whose wrapper is torn, and the air leaketh therein. *Nothing can mend her*.

27 I say unto you: It is easier to find a pet fly in a butcher's shop, than a woman who can sharpen a pencil.

28 ¶ Beware of a woman who exhausteth thy ammunition; she shall make thee do stunts. Thou shalt tell all thy secrets and yet learn *nothing* of her; thou shalt write her letters, and she shall not sign her name.

29 Curling locks are rather to be chosen than great riches, and a good figure is better than diamond rings.

30 ¶ Better is a dinner of macaroni where thou canst hear thyself think, than a banquet of dainty meats with music and loud timbrels where *her words escape thee* in the tumult.

31 Also, that men see her blushes, it is not good; and he that showeth her off, sinneth.

32 A reproof entereth more into a woman of sense than an hundred compliments into a fool.

33 The spirit of a proud woman will sustain a slight, but a *crooked nose-line* who can bear?

34 The end of a flirtation is as when one letteth out the last gasp of a siphon; but love endeth like the chianti flask; *its drops are bitter*.

35 The fear of women is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise experience and instruction.

36 ¶ How long, ye simple ones, will ye go in for *Platonic friendship?* and the scorners delight in their I-told-you-so's and the gossips whisper.

37 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when passion cometh. When her tears flow, I will say *Ha-ha!* I will rejoice with exceeding great mirth.

38 Then ye shall call on me and I shall not answer; ye shall ask my advice and I shall withhold it. For there is *no escape*.

39 Ye would none of my counsel; ye despised my precepts. Ye were as one who playeth with a *live wire* and is full of sparks.

40 Therefore shall ye eat the fruit of your own way, and be filled with your own devices. *Ye shall squirm*, uttering foolish lies, explaining nothing.

41 But whoso hearkeneth to me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil. Women shall say, *How interesting*, and shall much desire him. He shall be invited to box-parties; he shall dine at Sherry's at no cost. The matrons will receive him with smiles.

42 The wise shall enter into the *upper Fifth avenue*, but the West Side shall be the promotion of fools. In *East Eighteenth street* shall they take up their abode, a hall-bedroom shall receive them; and in Harlem shall they make their calls.



OUR VILLAGE

By Hayden Carruth

*Then gently scan your brother man,
Still gentler, sister woman.—BURNS.*

DELIGHTFUL hamlet where we dwell!
Sweet Auburn surely wasn't sweeter;
I would I had the skill to tell
Its charms in most deserving metre—
A quiet, rural, snug retreat,
With everything to soothe the senses;
The houses close beside the street,
And poppies peeping over fences.

All day the hum of droning bees,
With butterflies about in batches;
All day the busy birds in trees,
Constructing nests of shreds and patches.
The gray squirrels flirt and flaunt their tails,
Wild bunnies even show their noses;
Come June, each cottage never fails
To sport a front of climbing roses.

The children, coming home from school,
Wake drowsy echoes with their chatter;
Fat, wide-eyed cows keep calmly cool
Beneath the oaks, and grow still fatter.
A willow-shaded brook is near,
With long grass dipping o'er the edges;
At night the whippoorwill we hear,
While fireflies flash among the hedges.

The joyous people hereabout,
When finished are their daily labors,
Delight to delicately point out
The failings of their various neighbors:
How Smith has cheated Jones they show,
How Robinson neglects his own wife—
As also Scott, and Hyde, and Snow—
Though each calls on a neighboring lone wife.

You hear how two men had a fight,
How each will have the law on t'other;
And that a certain leading light
Will not speak to his only brother.

THE SMART SET

You're told the widows are too gay,
That every deacon is a sinner,
And how the preacher went away,
And met a doubtful dame at dinner.

They tell how Kate, who soon will wed,
Seems very, very far from sunny,
And whisper how she wanted Ned,
Who married Susan for her money.
They tell how White, who's sixty-eight,
Looks far too sharp at pretty faces;
How Banker Brown has aged of late,
And how 'tis known he plays the races.

Which wives will seek divorce they name,
And which ones are afraid to try it;
Which men get drunk and have no shame,
And which ones tinkle on the quiet.
They tell how Thompson treats his wife,
How Henderson has lost his credit;
That Jenkins leads a double life—
And just how long the fellow's led it.

That Knox and Mrs. Black some day
Plan to elope, you may hear noted—
But Mrs. Knox and Black, they say,
For many months have been devoted.
They give the church choir many a blast—
The women flirt so with the pastor!
They say young Clark is somewhat fast,
But that his father's very much faster.

And so we go our quiet ways,
Far from the city's sinful battle;
And with us, through the dream-like days,
The cock's far crow, the lowing cattle,
The children's shout, the church-spire bell,
The flowers that blossom in all weathers.
Here every prospect pleases well,
And only man needs tar and feathers.



WHOLESALE MATRIMONY

BEENAWAY—H'm! Little John Meeks—whom did he marry?

STAIDHOME—Oh, Miss Angelina Lingersmith and her mother and her maiden aunt, who is a prey to elocutionary talent; and her bachelor uncle, who drinks more than other people think is good for him; and an assortment of pet dogs, a collection of missionaries of various kinds, and faddists of several sorts, all of whom need the money, and several other relatives who look upon poor John as a raven sent down expressly to fill their hungry mouths.

UNCLE JIM'S LITTLE IDEA

By Anna A. Rogers

“GIVE me that which is mine!” I demanded several times in agitated French of the female monster who loomed above and around me, for I was in one of those white rages that reck naught either of altitude or avoirdupois.

Of course, I knew better, but I had absent-mindedly placed the eight centimes in that pudgy Latin hand before getting the requisite Anglo-Saxon hold upon my bunch of jonquils; and there she stood in front of her flower-stand, arms akimbo, looking down at me with her little, porcine eyes, and laughing the entirely mirthless laugh of Paris, that, in certain conditions of my nervous system, always seems to me to hold in solution the small episode of 1793.

“Is it that you have not, even here, a soupçon of shame?” I fumed, pointing dramatically to the Madeleine a few feet away, whose pagan outline then and there assumed a new significance.

There must have been something rather convincing in the way I hung nasally to the last vowel, for she fell back upon the national recourse of her caste, a screaming monologue, which drew about me several more becaped, bemustachioed hybrids.

Beyond the reach of fear, and as ready to be quenched in the arena for my eight-centime principle as any of the great lights in the whole calendar of saints, I hissed between my teeth:

“*Et bien heureusement nous avons toujours les gens d’armes!*” and I moved rapidly away, my mind at the moment less busy with revenge than with impending conjugations. Before I had taken ten steps, the jonquils were thrust

violently into my hands. This triumphant ending did not, however, prevent the precipitation of one of my fierce reactions against La Belle France to its utmost boundaries. I have for years been subject to them, and I always say to myself, as I did that morning, shedding the difficult, bitter tears of middle-age the while:

“I vow this time I never will return!”

I packed within the hour, and then got out my old, dog-eared map a bit drearily, for no one cared where I went, I least of all.

I am a widow of a certain age, with a trifle less certain income, and I had formed the European habit, with which I no longer struggled.

I rang for the *garçon*, a Swiss to whose venal nature I had so shamelessly appealed that mine was the only bell on his floor to which he habitually responded. I was about to ask his expensive advice about trains, when he handed me a letter. It was from my Uncle James, and it completely changed my mood and my rather shadowy plans. He is almost the only relation I have, certainly the only one with whom I had been in touch for years. The letter ran that he was alone in London on a business trip; had an unexpected fortnight on his hands through a rigmarole of circumstances which I skipped; and would join me two days later if I wired my plans at once. I telegraphed at a venture, “Engadine,” adding a skeletonized inquiry about the health of Pauline and the children. I had never seen my Aunt Pauline, but I judged her to be difficult from a certain excess of

exhilaration in Uncle James when I met him *en garçon* in Europe, innocently suggestive of the glad expansion of steam after the removal of some entirely adequate repression.

Dear, kind-hearted, short-visioned, bustling, chattering, ingenuous little Uncle James was four years my junior, by one of those chances that make such absurdities possible, and in private I called him Jim. I may as well add that no one would have guessed the disparity of years between us to be in his favor, because at that time I was just beginning to reap the reward, such as it is, of a lifetime of honest plainness, against which I had had the sense never seriously to battle. Even in a rose-garden the aster may have its golden hour, if it be but patient. And then Uncle Jim, with his usual courtesy toward women, was as bold as a badger long before his time.

The only other passenger in our carriage on the train by which we left Paris three days later was an Englishwoman with eyes, as I told Uncle Jim later, in which was the worn, beaten, dray-horse look of an ex-governess in that land of rigid caste.

I do not know by what mental process my uncle arrived at the conviction that he was obliged to entertain her, but he did—in fact, he always does; and the two voices put me to sleep in my corner; for his was comfortably familiar and hers very soft, with a deprecatory purr. We lost sight of her at Bâle.

"Susy," said Uncle Jim, suddenly, about a half-hour later, "I've an idea. I know this daisy old Continent as no woman can——"

"Now, don't say anything, Jim Porter, that you are going to regret later," I magnanimously interjected.

"Eh? Oh! Well—there's no use dodging it, this uncle-and-niece racket won't go down over here, not an inch!"

I sat up and stared.

"That woman who just left us put it into my head. She referred to you as my wife, and you know I've never dealt in anything but the slam-bang truth, so I out with the facts. Bless

you, she wouldn't even nibble at it! And you ought to have seen the look she gave you, Mrs. Susy, sleeping there like a babe; and you ought to have heard that British nonconformist sniff!"

"She went on talking to you, however?"

"Oh, yes, I'm a man, hence I work under an inherited franchise."

We laughed together with the easy laxity of middle-age.

"Well, out with your little idea, Jim."

"We've got to be brother and sister for the next fortnight, that's all," said he.

"Slam-bang truth!" I quoted.

"I'm thinking entirely of you, Susy, in this matter, and your reputation."

"It's awfully nice of you, Jim dear; but, really, I don't stay long enough in any one place to have any, save of the evanescent sort that a few well-placed francs will buy for me. It's a provincial sort of thing, after all, you know."

"I don't like to hear you talk that way, Susy, even in fun and to me; it sounds downright reckless," he commented, with a gravity I found excruciatingly funny, both then and afterward.

"I cannot but think, uncle mine, that silent hauteur will be a simpler solution," I suggested. But when he exclaimed: "Now, you know perfectly well there's about as much hauteur about me as there is to an English sparrow!" I had to agree with him; adding, however, that he was about the last man on earth to carry through successfully any such convoluted policy.

"We do look alike, you know," he reflected.

Time has done much to subdue me, but found me unprepared for that! However, after much argument, sarcasm and raillery, I yielded. To tell the truth, the idea began to appeal to me, and we conspired together excitedly as the train dragged along. We planted our common parental roof-tree, and I adopted outright his home-circle, not having any of my

own. We killed off all unessential relationships, without a qualm, at my suggestion; to entitle us to a hushed reserve in case of complications.

It was only when his redundant fancy became unduly enkindled, and he began to add an entirely unnecessary and almost febrile labyrinth of detail, that I firmly drew the line. It surprises me to this day to recall the puerile glee with which we practised our new relationship upon an obvious bridal couple who got into our carriage at this juncture, watching the effect with thumping hearts. Uncle Jim became at once expansive toward the bride to an inexpedient degree; and then, later, a sudden sense of rivalry sent me also into the ring for a turn for the benefit of the groom—which I lived to regret.

We really had a very gay trip over the pass and across Lake Thun; but of course it was raining at Interlaken. My uncle had never succeeded in seeing the Jungfrau, so we had decided to take it in en route; for see it he would, though Pontresina went to the wall; and, of course, I did not care one way or the other.

His ill-luck held, however, and the rain fell that day and the next, quite without an hour's intermission. The impatient guests of our hotel began to be friendly with one another, and I decided that it was safer to form no acquaintances, lest, with all my circumspection, I might say something in the *cabinet de lecture* the exact reverse of what "my brother" might at that very moment be imparting in the *salle de billard*—for talk he would. I insisted on going hastily over his hourly exhibitions of loquacity when we met, and checking off his revelations, greatly to the test of his patience. It seemed to me the very first day that I detected a morbid desire on his part to take untoward risks, but I put the curb on my excitable little uncle, and there is small doubt all would have gone well, but for one of my neuralgic headaches.

Thus isolated upon the island of intense suffering, I lost for twenty-four hours all sight and sound of Uncle Jim.

He sent a very kind little note to say I was not to bother about him in the least, the air alone was worth the price of admission, the young bride and bridegroom were next him at the table, and all was going merrily. And the rain continued.

Finally, toward evening of the second day, I managed to crawl down to the drawing-room, where I limply attached myself to one end of the half-circle about the open fire. To my amazement, I found myself and my affliction instantly greeted by name and with effusion. They swept me up to the hearth, they patted me down, they bolstered me up; they lowered two window-shades and raised another. It was "your brother" this and "your brother" that, till my head began to whirl. They fluttered about me, they cooed out sympathy, they purred out remedies, they fairly fought for a chance to congratulate me in three languages, on the possession of such a resourceful, witty, sympathetic, tactful *homme de salon* as that wretched relation known as my brother!

They told me of the charades he had so successfully carried through Tuesday night; and the lecture—I started violently with the instinctive distrust born of close relationship—he had given them on American institutions Wednesday morning; and they ended with a panegyric on the concert he had carried through Wednesday evening, to which it seems he had contributed two conspicuous numbers and apparently quite a progeny of encores. I had never heard Uncle Jim sing anything but "coon" songs, and those always in the face of open protest—and I shivered at the awful possibilities of that voice, that wanton vanity, free and untethered, caracoling in the face of Europe!

I sat absolutely speechless, lest I should contradict something he might have volunteered, for I was horrified at the indecent knowledge they all had of our more or less fictitious past, present and future. I also at once discovered important deviations from our original plan. The miserable man

had discounted my headache. In fact, he had become riotously intimate with every living soul in that weather-bound hotel, during those thirty-six hours when the sun and I had gone into eclipse.

I crept back to my room, feeling keenly the pitiful contrast I offered between my own dumb, colorless self and that coruscating genius, Uncle Jim. I rang my bell, and sent for him in several languages, but he was not to be found, nor was he in his seat when I nervously ventured in to the table d'hôte dinner.

As I made the usual vague, smileless acknowledgments, to the right impersonally, to the left toward our bride and bridegroom, and across the table, my heart gave one great thump, and then stood still. There, directly opposite, sat the Englishwoman with the corroding eye, who had traveled out of Paris with us, and to whom Uncle Jim had so ineffectually revealed our true relationship. She recognized me at once, and gave me a chilly smile, and that slanting glance of peccant curiosity with which discretion inspects, from high vantage ground, the mephitic pool of indiscretion. And, all the while, my soul groveled before her in abject terror, instead of rising and dominating the situation as it would have been entitled to do but for Uncle Jim's redundancies. I found time for a fervent prayer for his continued absence.

"How is your—uncle?" came softly across the table in that purr I remembered with a shudder.

"Thanks, pretty well," was my sapient response, impelled by a strong hope that his absence was due to physical disaster. I was beyond caring about either the nature or degree of the desired cataclysm.

"I hope nothing's gone wrong with the railway, Mrs. Eccles. That indefatigable brother of yours took a party of young people off to see the Lauterbrunnen Falls this afternoon, you know," volunteered the too-friendly bridegroom, in what I considered a

disappointingly strident voice for an Englishman.

"I didn't know," I mumbled, my lips jerking themselves into a fatuous smile. They were all welcome to think me a congenital idiot for all I cared! A sudden mad thought of going off into wild, gibbering hysterics came over me, almost uncontrollably; but, with my sex's ever alert consciousness, I recalled the fact that my slippers would not admit of so *dégagé* a scene, for on the theory that one end of me should be at entire ease even if the other end still ached, I had donned a pair as boundlessly redundant as Uncle Jim himself. No, I must keep my head at all hazards, and, if the worst came, I should slide quietly, unobtrusively, in one limp, indistinguishable mass under the table. It would not take much more of this sort of thing, I thought bitterly, as the eyes opposite—full of thirty years of prying into the affairs of others—conveyed clearly to me that any little change in the brummagem relationships to whatever men I happened to be traveling with, did not in the least impose upon her, however successful I might be with others.

And just at this point Tartufe himself entered, all smiles, followed by a flock of girls, panting from hastily achieved toilettes. Uncle Jim was complacency itself, bustling along with a word here and there, inextinguishably comic in his dinner-jacket. The entire room responded to his electric personality, and I felt the focus of many eyes upon me, on this, my first public appearance as the sister of my distinguished "brother." Under the fanfare of his appearance, I found a chance to whisper, as he sank into his place beside me:

"Jim, look opposite! Remember, you told her the facts—be careful, for heaven's sake."

But he had the reckless frivolity to be glad to see her, and told her so, and before my very eyes the sharp boundary lines of her impeccability disappeared shamelessly. I have since thought that with the purblind ego-

ism which makes life possible to all of us, she fancied she was arousing my jealousy.

The young bride on my uncle's left bristled with queries as to his trip in the drenching rain, and, this topic being safely objective, I tried to secure a few mouthfuls of much-needed dinner. My rage and dismay need only be indicated, when I heard Uncle Jim say, in his superfluous way:

"You see, my father being a physician——"

"Why, Mrs. Eccles, I certainly understood you to say on the train that day that your father was a military man!" interjected the young husband, poking forward his imbecile head. The Englishwoman opposite laughed aloud. The climax had arrived! I clutched frenziedly at Uncle Jim under the table, and, happily, for the first time in a long life, I succeeded in conveying by that occult method the intended meaning to a masculine brain.

In what I meant to be as insolently aloof a tone as I can command without preparation, I drawled:

"I fancied I had also told you that our mother was twice married." I felt Uncle Jim start.

"That doubtless accounts for the fact that there is absolutely no resemblance between you," volunteered, between chuckles, the retired governess. Happily for us, her whole life had developed in her a preference for underground methods, with only her own repressed consciousness for audience. But even Uncle Jim was subdued by the possibilities surrounding us, and, pleading fatigue, he fell into the pose of detached introspection that might well have been his from the first. The governess, meanwhile, made it a point to meet his eyes with hers twinkling with their common secret, under which significant glance he perceptibly shrank and withered. My uncle is not at his best when silent. The half-hour that followed gave to us both a disrelish for table-d'hôte dinners from which we have confessedly never entirely recovered.

"*Deux cafés* in the library," Uncle Jim finally instructed, in his usual bifurcated jargon; and we rose and left our reputations behind us.

"That old girl's serving us up hot, I dare say," moaned my broken-spirited uncle, as we settled ourselves in an inconspicuous corner of the empty library.

"I dare say," was all the comfort I accorded him.

"Now, that's not at all nice of you, Susy, to act that way! It was all for you, anyhow, and everything was going along like molasses till this old ivied ruin from bonny England appeared. She said she was going somewhere up the Vaud Vallée for the Summer; who on earth would suppose she'd turn up here?"

"We started for Pontresina ourselves," I replied, drily.

"Perhaps we'd better run lightly over the ground of blood and married ties once more," suggested he, in a tone he meant to be withering.

"It wouldn't be at all necessary, James Porter, if you hadn't seen fit to turn yourself into a sort of inexpensive *valet de place* for the whole of traveling Europe this Summer."

"Oh, I like that!" fairly screamed Uncle Jim. "I got up this cock-and-bull story, didn't I, that curdled the cream of society just now? I——"

But I was not to be diverted. "If you hadn't seen fit to paper the walls, fresco the ceilings, carpet the floors, with our entirely obscure, bourgeois pedigree—! Why, in the name of common sense, Jim, do you not recognize and control this *furor loquendi* of yours? I can't——"

"Susy," interrupted he, in a tired way that sent my thoughts caroming toward Pauline, "Susy dear, recriminations are a luxury, not a necessity, and our case is one of dire——"

"Unless you'll give up the Jungfrau and move on."

"The barometer is rising."

"Then we'll change our places to another table. I'll discover a draught and work my neuralgia—trust me."

"They'll talk just the same—es-

pecially the British sleuth-hound," he said, hopelessly.

"Let them talk! As for the old Englishwoman, you're all out, as usual. She is one large chortle of forbidden joy at sharing a naughty secret with a naughty man. All you've got to do is to go on flirting with her as you began."

"I? 'Flirting'? with that—that Druidical remain! Susy, sometimes I think that all this dawdling about over here in this noxious atmosphere is giving you a sort of moral malaria. You can't look at a thing any more in the old honest United States——"

"Granted—but you've caught it, too, on the fly, as you'd vulgarly phrase it, my revered uncle." After which I felt more cheerful, and sipped my coffee with some slight sense of comfort, adding, generously:

"Why, Jim, when I stop to think how alone and unprotected I have recklessly wandered about among these European pitfalls, without your avuncular aid, I am appalled."

"I know you're being funny, Susy, but I don't feel like laughing this evening; it's all too serious. I can't make you see it."

"So well do I see it that I say there's only one thing for us to do—go! There's no other solution."

"I'm going to see the Jungfrau," he replied, obstinately, tapping each word out with his tiny spoon against his *petit verre*.

"Then I'm going to my room, and stay there!" I sprang angrily to my feet.

"Good night, Susy. I find it's true one never knows a character before traveling with it."

"You're lucky! I find one knows nothing either before or after!"

As I went out, the guests began trickling in from the dining-room. I noticed Uncle Jim's gregarious glance fell at once upon the governess, and I was as sure that he joined her and had set to work along the lines I suggested, the moment my back was turned, as that the Jungfrau was still there, behind the curtain of clouds.

I was reading in my room under the usual European difficulties, when, about an hour later, I heard Uncle Jim's unmistakable step—quick, heavy, nervous—coming along the corridor. I had already risen and was unlocking the door when he rapped so unexpectedly loud that rage instantly took the place of humor, and I drew the bolt as slowly as possible.

"Susy, Susy, I must speak to you at once!" he cried, hoarsely, on his side of the door, continuing, when we were face to face: "The game's up! The L. F. Anguses have just arrived on the diligence. They spotted me in a second in the office!"

"And if not intruding, may I ask who the L. F. Anguses may be?"

"There, that's just it! Pauline's life-long, next-door friends, and expatriated you never even heard of them! And, by jingo, the chances are they never heard of you! And yet here we are, 'brother and sister,' uncle and niece, any old thing, according to your seat at the table! O Lord!" He steamed up and down my restricted apartment with an impetus that threatened to expand it violently, and I sat and laughed; finally, I was able to say:

"But, Jim dear, I don't see any reason why the hotel people——"

"Hotel people? Who said 'hotel people'? Great Scott, it's a bigger mouthful than that! I'm thinking of the Anguses themselves, and Pauline, and—and the whole darned kit and boodle!" he fairly shouted at me, glaring the while. And when I could speak at all, after my laugh of perfect joy, I murmured, chokingly:

"And your niece's reputation. Don't forget your niece's reputa——"

It seems, on second thoughts, hardly fair to make any record of his high-pitched reply.

"Can't you see an inch before your nose, Susan Eccles? Can't you see that the bride and the English bloodhound and Mrs. Angus will all drift together as ships do in a fog, and there'll be a crash?"

"Oh, I do not see it! I do not see it!" I cried, joyfully.

"Susy," he began, in a broken-hearted way.

"Yes, little uncle?" I imitated, all my old affection for him returning in that moment of retributive reward.

"Susy, can you be ready to leave early to-morrow morning — before people are up?"

"And the Jungfrau?" I suggested.

Anathema again defiled the purity of that delicious Swiss air, as he banged my door after him.

Unfortunately, the morning dawned with a burst of sunshine and a clear, absolutely cloudless sky, and the entire hotel bustled with life. Uncle Jim and I had the usual economical breakfast of the Continent in our respective rooms, and then, fully equipped for departure, we crept quietly down-stairs. He clung to me with pathetic helplessness, his braveries of manner hanging limp and lifeless about him. Our bills were paid, the diligence at the door, and, as we crossed the broad veranda, a voice cried:

"Oh, Mr. Porter! You're not going away? And such a perfect day for the Jungfrau! You said last night you had not seen it. How extraordinary to leave now!"

"Mrs. Angus!" moaned Uncle Jim. "Come along, Susy, let's get it over. Mrs. Angus, this is my niece, Susan Eccles. Pauline must have spoken about her to you time and time again."

"I don't seem to recall it," came the very restrained reply, as I tried not to loom so hopelessly above my uncle, and rejoiced that I had tied over my face a rather heavy blue-chiffon veil, behind which I could revel in facial freedom. I could feel her distrustful eyes boring away at the thin obstruction, and suddenly an altogether wanton sensation of gratitude came over me that my figure was far and away the best of me. So long as a perverted world was bent upon it that I was a suspicious character, I felt a surprisingly strong desire to come somewhere near my assigned rôle; and—to Uncle Jim's obvious amazement—I found

myself bridling and laughing quite girlishly.

"Going, Mr. Porter? Why, here's the sun at last!" exclaimed another feminine voice from the doorway, and there stood our bride, beside her the husband looking on with a complex expression in his frank young eyes; one part an inclination to wink at my palpably nervous uncle, and the other part the exact antithesis of that.

"Come on, Susan, the stage won't wait all day! Good-bye, Mrs. Angus. Awful sorry to go, but something has occurred to make it imperative. Tell Pauline, when you write, that I was feeling well, but seeing it all in a great rush, of course; and my niece and I send lots of love, and so forth. Good-bye, good-bye! Ah, madame, you, too, here so early? *Adieu, au revoir. Und der gnädige Fräulein? Auf wiedersehen.* Good-bye, again." He turned from one to another, expansive to the last, as the entire hotel poured out to see the regretted and unexpected departure of its most popular guest.

"For God's sake, Susy, will you get into that stage some day this week?" he growled at me, under his breath. In all the confusion, I saw the bride turn to her husband, and I distinctly heard,

"His niece?"

And from him a dry, "Quite so."

We jumped to our seats, the stage gave a lurch, and we were off. Uncle Jim sank into a corner with a long moan, for we had it to ourselves. I put my head out of the window, and glared backward.

"Jim, Jim, quick, look back!"

We saw Mrs. Angus standing pale and severe, surrounded by a small but animated group composed of the bride and the bridegroom, and the elderly feminine pedagogue from England. Uncle Jim agreed, when he felt in the mood for talking at all, to drop our fictitious relationship and weather it thereafter on realities and reserve. Our mail had been sent on to Pontresina, and one moment after we had registered there at our hotel, the clerk

handed Uncle Jim a telegram and a batch of letters. As he opened and read the former, I saw him turn white before my eyes.

"Read that, Sue Eccles, read that, and let in a ray of light if you can!" he whispered, leading the way to the library with the blind, wavering step of extreme faintness. It was a copy of a cable from the United States, forwarded by our London bankers, and it contained these portentous words:

"Your sister episode discovered. Go with children to father's to-day."

"PAULINE."

"The L. F. Anguses!" I cried, in a flash.

"The devil!" he cried, in another.

The explanatory cable cost Uncle Jim three hundred and twenty-five francs, and we both signed it. But it took three months to appease the outraged Pauline, and my first trip home in ten years. She proved even more difficult than I had fancied.



TWO SONGS

I—SUNRISE

THRILLING of dappled dawn-clouds, far and far;
Thrilling of birds awake in fern and heather;
Out in the west, a fading moon and star
Slip from the world together.

Quiver of gold across the hill-crest blue,
Shiver of white where whispering aspens sway;
Out in the grass, a diamond world of dew
Flashes and fades away.

Shade of the night sinks down behind the west;
Hush of the night is drowned in songs above;
O my heart's sunrise, hope is sweeter than rest;
Better than peace is love!

II—SUNSET

A wide sky and a silver star;
A mountain summit white;
A bird's wing, black against the far
Infinitudes of light.

Breaking waves on a pebbled beach;
Long, shadowy leagues of foam;
A lessening sail gone out to reach
The Holy Lands of home.

Long was the weary glare of day;
Wide was the world-waste sea;
O my heart's rest, I turn away—
Home to the dark and thee!

MABEL EARLE.

THE HOUSE OF THE BRAIN

By Churchill Williams

SHE had the wedding-ring on her finger. She had worn many rings in the five years past, but this one, like the blush that softened a crude stain on her cheek, as she stepped out of the squire's office, was priceless, yet was the first for those years which had not cost her a price beyond counting. Her husband clumsily helped her into the wagon, got in himself, clucked to the horse, and they started down the maple-shaded village street.

The women were all at their windows or on the street to see her go by, and she would have laughed in their faces, if her old, defiant spirit had not deserted her. Their pity of her husband and scorn of herself made her angry. For, now, she was Mrs. Edward Gowan, an honest woman in the law. An ill turn of the worst of fortunes and heart-sickness had made her grasp eagerly at his offer. He had taken her because no other woman would have him. Knowing what she was, but wanting only some one who would cook and keep the house in order for him, he gave her his name and a shelter; she gave him what remnants were left of the dower of her girlhood.

Now she appraised him as her husband, and found him tall and gaunt, with curved back, long, weather-beaten face, and gray in his hair. His paper collar did not hide his bony throat, and his black coat was well polished. The fingers that held the reins were big and square, and his jaws worked ceaselessly on a mouthful of tobacco. Yet he was her husband. Resignation, rather than gratitude, was begot of the thought.

They drove on, mile after mile, into the back country, among the hills. The road dwindled into a scar upon the face of the mountain spur. It wound about trees, and crept between rocky ledges. He had not spoken since they started, and his silence began to oppress her. She asked him if they had much further to go.

"A couple of miles," he answered.

Now the oaks and hemlocks grew closer together, and towered so that the sunlight slanted through them only here and there. The birds seemed to have been left behind. A rug of pine-needles and sodden leaves deadened the footfalls of the horse. They climbed a long hill which seemed to overtop everything; she looked forward to reaching the summit. At the top, the horse was halted to breathe. Her husband lazily ran his eyes over the valley at his feet. He pointed across the billows of foliage to where something gray showed indistinctly among the trees.

"My house," he said.

The spot he indicated bore little resemblance to a habitation. More satisfying was the patch of quicksilver which flashed among the green near to where he pointed. The interminable forest seemed less forbidding with that shimmer of water to break its monotony.

The wagon lurched and slid over stones and half-buried stumps, down the side of the hill. The road was an opening broken through the trees, with here and there a boulder rolled aside because heavier boulders disputed passage on either hand. The newly-wedded pair emerged into a

clearing; the house was suddenly in front of them.

It was of frame, clapboarded and shingled, bleached by winds, rain, snow and sun. Shutterless windows and a door with warped panels retained traces of green paint. In the space about the house, chickens scratched and dug dust-baths.

"What do y' think of it?" Gowan asked. His mouth remained open in a mirthless grin. "Kinder lonely lookin'?" he went on, when she did not reply. "But there's a boss dog tied up in th' woodshed, an' there's chickens an' ducks an' a cow. It's my home, anyway," he finished, defiantly, for her silence nettled him.

"Yes," she said.

He helped her out of the wagon because she extended a hand to him. He led the horse and wagon to the stable back of the house. She stood where he had left her, her eyes resting on the house, but not seeing it. Her husband's footsteps and the thud of the horse's hoofs became fainter. She heard the screaming of the ill-hung door. Then all was still.

She looked about her. The sky line on every side was notched by the backbone of the hills; in front of her, a pond, studded with decaying stumps, curved out of sight beyond the trees. A building, with roof lurching into the water, survived the years which had obliterated all other trees about the saw-mill that once had stood at the end of the pond. Nature was reclaiming her own; the place was a sweep of greens, girdled by hills, domed with blue, shot with the silver of water and bathed now in sunlight. But her eyes traveled over it all, searching for some sign that was human, and found none. When a dog barked, and she heard a slouching tread which she knew must be her husband's, she turned with a sense of tremendous relief. The faded house, the chickens, the big figure coming toward her, the yellow cur snapping at his hand, were welcome sights.

"Takin' it all in?" he said, with an attempt at jocular. "There's

lots of it t' see. What do y' think of it?"

"I don't think I know—just yet," she said, and drew closer to him. "Let's go inside," she added. "I want to see the house." With her it was anything to get where the hills did not roll down upon her, and she could stretch out a hand and touch something.

Gowan had expected her to berate him for bringing her to such a place, or, at least, to cry. If she had complained he was prepared to tell her plainly that he had rescued her from a worse state. Here, he was nominal keeper of two thousand acres of hill and forest, the domain of a Shaker community which had its settlement in another district. For a living, he hauled logs and cut wood on lumberland five miles away. He had the strength of arm to do the work well; he had the rugged health which made him fall into a dreamless sleep an hour or so after he had eaten supper, and he had the disposition to feed and clothe his new wife, and to give her no blows or hard words so long as she looked after his bodily comfort. He was of the opinion that these were benign conditions for one who had enjoyed the favors of many men and the respect of none.

He took her through the house, and showed her where he kept the food and how the stove could be made to burn. The rooms were dirty and musty, the few dishes in the kitchen greasy, the floor stained. A pestilence of flies was everywhere. Up-stairs, in his bedroom, the coverings were huddled at the foot of the bed, the pillow lay on the floor.

"'Bout time I got a wife," he said. "It'll take a right smart lot of work t' straighten out things; but it'll give y' somethin' t' do."

"Yes," she said again. She might as well have said, "No."

Her indifference made him angry.

"Look a-here!" he exclaimed. "I don't want no hard words—on our weddin'-day; but, it seems t' me y' don't take t' y'r new home. What's

th' matter, anyway? All it needs 's slickin' up."

"I'll be all right—by-and-bye—I guess," she answered. "I'm—tired."

The crust of his uncouth animal nature was penetrated. He had an idea that he should comfort her. "I guess it *is* kinder lonely," he said. "But y'll get use t' it." He bethought himself that he had not yet claimed his prerogative as a husband. Suddenly, he flung an arm around her neck and kissed her. He drew his hand across his mouth afterward, and burst into a loud laugh.

"Funny!" he remarked. "I ain't kissed anybody for—I don't know how long; but it's good, jus' th' same."

She had been surprised by his kiss; she did not understand his laughter; yet something stirred in her at the act. Its roughness was the seal of its honesty. It brought her ideas to a focus. It was his *wife* he had kissed.

"I suppose I might as well get supper," she said.

While he was bringing in fire-wood, she laid aside her hat and coat. The artificial flowers and tawdry ribbons glared against the stark realities of the pine table and chairs, the rusted stove, the litter of uncleansed dishes, and the flaking white-washed walls. But she had been a country-bred girl once, and, after a fashion, she got the supper. When they had eaten, she washed the dishes while he sat on the door-step and smoked. By-and-bye, he called to her:

"Come an' look at th' sun! 'Pears t' me I never seed it firier."

Leaning against the door-post, she looked toward the west. In a cleft in the hills, the glow of the sunken sun set all the tree-tops in flame; the sky melted from crimson until, overhead, the fleecy balls of cloud were like the heart of a rose. A whippoorwill called somewhere, and her mind leaped the barriers of the hills, and she was far away, with bright lights and many people about her. Then her husband gave a ferocious yawn, and the whippoorwill complained again. In an instant, she sank upon the floor, and the tears gushed down her face.

Her husband jumped up, and looked on her, uncomprehending, until he saw that she was crying. Then he put an arm under her, and carried her inside. "Frightened y' a-yawnin'," he said; "it wuzn't nuthin; stop y'r cryin'!"

The sun had begun to eat up the mist which hung above the pond the next morning when Gowan pushed back his chair from the table, lighted his pipe, and started for the stable. He had devoured his breakfast in silence, and he left the room without a word. For a few minutes, she sat at the table, then jumped up and followed him.

He was harnessing the horses to a long-bedded lumber wagon. "Quarter an hour late in startin'," he said, as he jerked the straps into place. "Comes o' bein' married." He threw the reins around one of the stakes of the wagon, and added: "But I got t' get a drink of that spring water 'fore startin'; water ain't fit t' drink over t' th' mill." He strode down the slope from the stable to the spring that bubbled at its foot, and bent and drank. As he raised his head, he saw that she had followed him.

"Want a drink?" he asked.

"No, I'm not thirsty," she replied.

"What did y' come for, then?" he asked.

"Oh, nothing," she returned, slowly. She herself did not know exactly why she had come.

None the less, she was close behind him as he climbed the slope again. A fear of something indefinable grew upon her. She wanted to ask him to wait, and knew that he would not understand the request. So he was on the spring-board between the axles, and had gathered up the reins, before her dread found tongue.

"Wait! Wait—a minute!" she cried.

"What's th' matter? Hain't forgotten nuthin', hev I?"

"No! Yes!—yes, you've forgotten to tell me—when you'd be back."

"At supper-time, of course. Thought y' knowed that." He clucked to his horses, and they started on.

"Oh, wait! wait! Won't you wait?" she begged. She seized one of the stakes of the wagon as though to hold it back. "There's something I want to tell you."

"Well, what is it?" he asked, impatiently.

But she stood speechless, grasping the wagon-stake. He was looking in her face, and she saw that he did not comprehend, and would not, if she told him. She released her hold on the wagon. "It's nothing," she forced herself to say. "I'll see you at six o'clock."

He nodded, and spoke to his horses. She watched the wagon move across the level clay ground and into the road until the trees hid it.

She stood immovable, straining her eyes, and imagining that she caught glimpses of the team long after it had vanished. Then her eyes swept the base of the nearest hill and, further on, the pond, in places glittering, in places shadowed by the wraiths of vapor which curled upward as the mist was dissipated. Here and there, a stump grew out of the gray veil and took on gigantic size. But none of these things seemed quite real to her. She found herself listening to the lapping of the water on the little beach, and soon the tinkling sound beat and beat on her ears until her brain was bursting.

Without premeditation, she turned and ran wildly for the house. An hour passed before she dared to go outside the door. It was because the house had become more dreadful than the open air that she fled from it.

It was then that she remembered there was a dog, and she whistled and exhausted every wile in trying to bring it into sight. Next she got some bread, and coaxed the chickens about her; and they remained, a bustling, cheerful circle, until they were gorged. When they began to scatter, she tried to catch one of them to hold in her arms; but they scurried away. At noon, she ate what she could find in a dash into the kitchen. Then she remembered the cow, and, for the rest of the afternoon, kept constantly by its

side, moving as it moved, taking courage from its unconcern, not daring to venture away from it. And all day long the peevish cries of the swallows, the tapping of a woodpecker, the buzzing of insects, the singing of the chickens, the cropping and munching of the cow, made a dreadful void of her hearing; and the dazzling sunshine revealed rolling, unbroken hills of green, the empty house and the placid stretch of water in every inevitable line.

About sundown she heard the rattling of wagon-wheels, and she sped to the house and was busy in the kitchen as her husband drove past. She crowded down the impulse to run after him and stand by the stable door while he unharnessed and fed the horses. He found her setting the table, and supper was soon ready.

"Gettin' shaken down?" he said.

"I—guess so," she answered.

He did not notice her hesitation. "All women has their foolishnesses," he remarked, indulgently. "But they git rid of 'em."

"How soon?" she questioned, eagerly.

"I hain't had much chanct t' learn; I reckon some of 'em 's skittish fur a week, mebbe."

"A week! That's—a mighty long time," she repeated, partly to herself.

"Yes, a week's a mighty long time fur anybody t' be so all-fired foolish," he agreed. "But it's cur'ous," he went on, "what some folks'll do when they's alone. There was old man Parker, from th' poorhouse. Benjamin, he put th' old man in a shanty up in th' woods, an' all Parker had t' do was t' watch the dam in th' bottom an' see there wuzn't no cuttin' done by outsiders. But th' old fool b'gun kickin' at once; an' when Benjamin sent a man over at th' week's end, Parker begged t' be took back. They had t' push him off th' wagon. In another week Benjamin come over himself, an' Parker went on that bad that Benjamin seed he wasn't no manner o' use, an' took him back."

"Yes, it's awful," she said, in a low voice.

"Should think 'twas," he returned, catching her last word. "Benjamin said that was what come o' helpin' a poorhouser. But, I reckon, Parker was kinder lunny."

She assented with a startled look which he did not see, and his brief uncertainty as to her contentment faded away. At the mill, they had told him that no woman would stick it out alone all day long. They did not know his wife, that was plain. So he was gracious to her in his own way, and, when he drove off the next morning, called back to her:

"Don't do too much talking t'-day, er y'll make all o' yer neighbors tired of y' at th' start!" She heard him chuckling to himself as he started his horses; and she stiffened herself to thrust off the fear that leaped upon her as soon as he was gone.

But the story he had told her of old Parker repeated itself to her, word for word. She began to reproduce in herself the succeeding stages of terror which had made Parker helpless. Soon she was listening for the sound of approaching wheels which should tell her that Benjamin, or his hired man, or—she awoke to her identity—or her husband was coming, and that she would have the chance to beg, demand that she be taken away—somewhere.

She turned about slowly, her gaze searching the hills and the clearing around the house. All at once, she found herself running at full speed, and, at last, she threw herself down in the grass beside the cow. Each heart-beat the day long marked the steps of an unseen, unheard terror that stalked her wherever she went.

And so, till the end of the week, she lived through the horrors of sunshine and quiet and emptiness, clinging to the hope that her dread would drop from her in a week, as her husband had said it did with all women who were left alone.

But eight days went by, and the eighth was worse than all that had gone before. Her husband, coming home that night, found her with wide-

open eyes, talking to herself. He asked her if she was sick. Yes, she was—sick—a little, she said, and fell asleep.

A thin, persistent rain was falling at daybreak, and everything was more desolate in appearance than before. Yet, to his surprise, she was more cheerful and alert. She seemed expectant of something. He was pleased with himself accordingly; for, had he not told her that she would not be lonely, once she became familiar with her surroundings?

For a while after he had gone that morning, she moved about the kitchen with one of the dishes in her hand. Then she became aware of a regular tap! tap! tap! It seemed at first to come from the window. She whirled about to see what caused it. But only the shroud of rain and mist which clothed the corpse of tree and hillside met her look. The tap! tap! tap! went steadily on, and her legs were palsied, and she could not turn her head. But suddenly a light flashed before her eyes. Everything was plain to her. She laughed softly as she ran to the door.

In her eagerness she fumbled with the latch; but, presently, she had the door open. She held out both hands to the rain and cried, gladly: "Oh, you dear thing! It was so good of you to come! And through the wet, too! Come right in."

She stood aside, then closed the door. "Put your feet to the heat," she urged; "they will dry soon. When I've straightened up the room we'll have a long talk."

She bustled about, humming gaily. She broke off with questions, "Why didn't you come before? I've been expecting you. Why? Because my husband was here, you say? What nonsense! He goes off every morning, and he doesn't come back till sunset. And I'll tell you something—I fooled him. He thought I was afraid to be alone. I made him think that. But I wasn't afraid; I only wanted a chance to see you. I knew you'd come soon. Now, we will keep it a secret. And you'll come every day."

At the dinner-table, she chattered without pause in the same strain. Afterward, as she worked on some sewing, she unfolded her plans for keeping this secret from Gowan. "For he mightn't understand," she explained. "He might think—he might think I ought not to be seeing my old friends. He doesn't know you, but that wouldn't make any difference. He says all women have a lot of foolishness in them. He says they get over it after they've been alone—a *while*." She laughed. It was a rare joke now.

Just before the hour when she expected her husband home, she opened the door. She stood on the door-step, calling down the path to the rain: "Come in to-morrow, Mary, sure. We'll have a good, long day. You might bring Jennie Moore, if you want to. Don't tell any one else." She laid a finger across her lips.

When Gowan came in, steaming with the rain, she said nothing of the events of the day. He was in an ill-humor. She hung his clothing by the fire; she had supper ready for him before he asked for it. She put on another dress, too, and wore something at her neck which he noticed.

When he stood by the window, after the meal, pressing the tobacco in his pipe-bowl, he asked: "What 're y' dressed up for?"

"Nothing; I just felt—good."

"What did I tell y'?" he exclaimed. "Y're gettin' shaken down."

"I ain't lonely—now—a bit," she replied. She was fearful of betraying her secret. She said no more.

But, for the following two weeks, she was in singing spirits. There were no complaints from her when he left in the morning. He began to take great pride in his judgment of women. The comfort of a wife truly was more than was claimed. He bragged about this at the mill.

Then, one day, a thing happened which it had not occurred to him could happen. As he came into the kitchen that night, and looked about him, he understood dully the meaning

of the word "home." At the supper-table, he told her what had befallen him. "We're goin' t' move," he said. He went on without noticing the alarm which sprang into her face at the words. "Yes," he said; "them Shaker folks has sold this here land. They've given me notice t' quit. Don't need me no longer."

He got no answer, and repeated his statement, then looked up at her. She was dumb, staring at him with brilliant, dreadful eyes. "What's th' matter with y'?" he asked. "Y' don't seem t' like th' idea of leavin' here."

"We aren't going to—leave *here*?" she exclaimed.

"Ain't that what I just said? We're goin' t' move."

"Where to?"

"I've got a new place—'bout ten miles from here."

"Ten miles?—from here? Oh, no! Not that far!"

"Yes, ten miles. What's th' matter with that?"

"It's too far! too far from them—from here! It's too far! too far! I tell you." A catch came into her voice. She moistened her lips several times. The next moment she threw back her head, and laughed.

"What's th' matter with y'?" he demanded, dumfounded. But still she laughed. Suddenly he was afraid.

He shouted at her, "Shut up! shut up! shut up! I tell y'."

But, leaning back in her chair, she laughed. He grasped her roughly by the shoulder, and shook her, and thrust his face, distorted by rage and fear, close to hers. Still she laughed.

Rage was wiped from his visage, something froze his heart. His bent fingers, for an awful moment, would not uncloze. But, with an effort, he wrenched them loose from her arm, and, overthrowing a chair, he dashed from the house. Her laugh trod on his heels as he ran across the clearing, along the road, into the darkness. He could not leave the laugh behind.

In the house which he had fled from, she rocked in her chair, and laughed, and laughed.

A BOOK

By Willis Leonard Clanahan

I AM a Book.
Somebody wrote me;
Will any one note me,
I wonder, or quote me,
Or look
Inside of my blinding,
Dazzling binding,
Or steal my phrases,
As girls pull daisies
By the side of a winding
Wayside brook?

I am a Book.
Will I lie on a shelf,
With none but myself
A-nigh?
Will I lie
And rust
In the dust
Of some worm-eaten nook?
Will any one see me?
Will any one buy me?
Will some beautiful, dreamy,
Delectable, creamy
Young damsel come nigh me
And smile
And admire
For a while,
And desire
To have me and hold me,
And lovingly fold me,
So none could defile?
Would she take me
And shake me,
All dusty
And musty
And rusty,
And give me a place
In her heart,
On her shelf,
For the sake of my art
And myself,
And to save from disgrace
A poor little book
In a shop-keeper's nook?

THE SMART SET

I am a Book.
 My being began
 In the brain of a man.
 What earthly spark
 Of heavenly fire
 Will reach him there in the dark,
 When desire
 Is low and faith is dim?
 What smile
 For a while
 Will gladden him,
 For the sake of a look
 At his poor little book,
 In the dust
 And the rust
 Of a shop-keeper's nook?



AN ENGAGING MAN

“THERE was a drummer took sick and died here, three weeks ago,” said the landlord of the tavern at Polkville, Arkansas. “He was a thick-set, guitar-playin’ sort of feller, and the girl he was engaged to marry came over from Torpidville to attend the funeral; also from Waupsey; also from Peapack; also from Tonganoxie; also from som’ers in Kansas, and some place up in Missouri. Seein’ how many there was of ’em, they put away their engagement-rings, and, figgeratively speakin’, organized a new society, and invented a yell. And it was a pretty durned expressive one, too, lemme tell you!”



FOLDED TO HIS GATHER

DOLLY SWIFT—He called me his dear little lamb.
 SALLY GAY—What then?
 DOLLY SWIFT—Oh, then he gathered me into the fold.



A DEFINITION

LITTLE AMZI (*who has an inquiring mind*)—Uncle Timrod, what’s a bonanza?
 FARMER NECKWHISKERS (*painfully experienced*)—A bonanza, durn it! is a hole in the ground, owned by a liar! That’s what a bonanza is!

THE IMPOSSIBLE THING

By Eleanor A. Hallowell

“YOU may talk of marriage to me for ever and ever,” said my niece, Angeline, with a seraphic smile that took all pertness out of her words, “but I shall never, never marry. Fate and temperament are against me. I tell you”—here Angeline backed up against the door, defiantly, and fairly hurled her final edict at me—“I tell you that it is an impossible thing for me to marry either the man I love, or any man whom I don't love.” With which tragical announcement, she flounced herself out of the room, and left me alone with my sewing to meditate nervously on this latest vagary of my enchanting young relative.

As a rule, the women of our family have not been considered high-strung, but Angeline's temperament, from babyhood up, has outraged every family tradition that we have ever cherished. Angeline's nature is keyed eternally to the snapping point, and that the snapping catastrophe has not yet actually occurred is due, I flatter myself, to the absolute serenity of my own nature.

Angeline is mine. I inherited her from her father—my brother—along with a few debts, and I have found the complete inheritance a never-ending source of astonishment and interest. The debts are quite old, but Angeline herself is only twenty.

In the secret inner recesses of my heart, I call Angeline my musical attachment on life, for, being myself a severely plain and unsophisticated spinster, unable to cope at first hand with romance and tragedy, I find that my investment in Angeline—though

somewhat costly—enables me to keep in constant thrilling touch with every legitimate emotion possible to woman-kind. Most of the strains, I acknowledge, are new to me, but a few of them are vaguely reminiscent of tunes I used to know but was never allowed even to hum.

My niece is distractingly full of faults, but she is as pretty as a rich girl and as generous as a poor one, and, in spite of all her wilful notions, has most mercifully escaped the critical blasé smartness of most modern youngsters. There is nothing blasé about Angeline. She is alive from tooth to toe, and night and day are all alike to her. I have been accounted an energetic woman, but beside Angeline I am a rag, a ravel, a shred, a canceled postage-stamp, an unstarched collar. But I live. There is no doubt in the world that I live.

When Angeline was five, we dwelt in a maze of curls and tucks and ruffles and laundry bills! At ten, we struggled with pig-tails, and with hair-ribbon bows as big and gay as parrots; we went to dancing-school, and learned to cavort in strange and marvelous fashion; we began to think about the boys, and introduced into our chaste and exclusive circle of paper-dolls a number of rakish-looking young men from a tailor's catalogue. At fifteen, we joined the church, lamented bitterly the unspiritual relation of the sexes, and argued night and day concerning the advisability of entering a convent and devoting our life to the poor. At eighteen, we sat in the moonlight or the twilight or the dark, and with flaming face thrashed out the time-worn girlish

puzzle as to whether if you were shipwrecked on a desert island with the man you loved, it would be right for you to marry yourselves by as much of the marriage service as you could remember, or whether it would be considered wrong, and you'd have to keep on living with him on one side of the island and you on the other till you were ninety years old, and died! At twenty, we had lovers.

I must confess that I have always cherished a secret hope that Angeline would develop into one of those story-book beauties for whose sake men drop dead along the street; but, with the exception of a slight bronchial cold which Dr. Hudson caught the last time he took her fishing, I have never known any harm to come to Angeline's lovers. That the number of these lovers is not legion is also a disappointment to me; but when I stop to consider that there are only three eligible men in the village, and that we have two of them, I feel that I have certain cause for gratitude.

One of these competitors for Angeline's heart is this Dr. Hudson, a very promising young practitioner, and the other is the Rev. Mr. Steele, who has lately come from a really large city to minister to the spiritual wants of this meager little community. Angeline met him, I understand, a year ago, when she was visiting a more worldly aunt than I. I claim that he has followed her here, but she resents this suggestion with a rudeness quite unpardonable from any one more distant than a niece.

From what Angeline says, however—"It is an impossible thing for me to marry either the man I love or a man I don't love"—I am forced to conclude that one of these suitors is favored and one unfavored; but far be it from me to pry into a young girl's heart for the express purpose of finding out just which one of the young men it is that we love. Still, the fact remains that Angeline's twentieth Summer is our worst yet. And I live as tranquilly as I can in a steady downpour of reproaches and caresses, while Angeline's

spirits rage from bridal day-dreams to spasms of tears that a widow herself could not excel.

It is very evident to me that my wild Angeline has found her master, and is bucking like a bronco, at the very thought of bit and rein; but just which man is the master I am unable to discover by any honorable means that I can think of.

The minister is a jolly young specimen of theology, with no damnation theories at all to scare the sinful into paths of righteousness, and he preaches with the same cheerful forcefulness that he uses in tennis, and is evidently an all-round spiritual, physical and social athlete. Angeline calls him "a dear boy," and helps him with his classes in the Sabbath school, brings him unfailingly home to Sunday tea, and plays tennis arduously with him most of the week.

The doctor, on the other hand, is a grave young model of the self-made man. He is much the handsomer fellow of the two, that is as features go, but his shoulders are tired and stooping, and he walks with the faintest perceptible hint of lameness. So far as I can see, he takes no possible recreation except trout-fishing, and it is no uncommon occurrence to meet his horse and buggy, driverless, on the road, with only a crackling bush in the distance to signify that the owner is prowling somewhere after a new pool. Angeline calls him "a splendid thing," and drives with him several mornings a week to visit "the sick parishioners Mr. Steele is so anxious about"—a proceeding which does not agree at all with my sense of decency toward either man. But Angeline is—Angeline.

Now, as Angeline's day and week and month are pretty evenly divided between her ruddy, jolly lover and her handsome, pathetic lover, it is extremely difficult for me to come to any conclusions in the matter. Both men, in my presence, are ecstatically devoted to the young lady, but it is very evident to me, when Angeline cries herself to sleep at night, that one

or the other of them is occasionally arbitrary with my darling.

It seems rather cruel to me that in this, the most exciting situation of my life, I should lose the best part of my musical attachment—Angeline's confidence; but, old and plain and unsophisticated as I am, I have yet divined a few life secrets, and one of them is that there are only two ways of living: You can either live hard and keep your mouth shut, or you can be a dreamer and talk about it. When Angeline really began to live, she stopped talking. But because I am only a dreamer, I shall always have a good deal to say about men and love.

So you will understand, altogether, just what the situation was on the day when Angeline came and stood in my doorway and was impudent concerning the marriage question. After she had flounced herself out of my sight, I hemmed four ruffles for her pink muslin frock, basted a sleeve in upside down, and pricked my finger over the collar before I was ready to deal with the problem. Then I called my refractory niece back to me. She came sulkily, and perched herself on a hassock at my feet.

"Angeline," I observed, critically, "you are a distractingly pretty girl. There is just as much spun gold and sapphire-blue and peaches and cream about you as about any enchanted princess in a fairy story, but"—as Angeline began unconsciously to prune herself—"you are certainly very cranky. Here you are, twenty years old, and not ready to marry. With your temper I wouldn't dare wait till my gold was tarnished, my sapphires dim, and my peaches-and-cream cheeks nothing but preserves."

"But, aunty," expostulated Angeline, "didn't I tell you that it was an impossible thing for me to marry either the man I loved or a man I didn't love?"

"Nonsense!" said I; "nonsense!" taking her saucy little chin in my hands, and gazing down deep into her brimming eyes. "Now, Angeline,

Angeline, I'm going to give you a big piece of my mind. You're a very silly little girl. It is perfectly evident to me that you are in love, but you are as absurd as the bicycle novice who can't keep either on or off. You've plainly got to the point where you can't be happy either with or without a certain man, and something must be done." Angeline's chin quivered pitifully in my hand, but I would not let her slip away.

"It seems to me," I continued, sententiously, "that I'd choose the easier course, and then stick to it. There are only two things that can be done when a man hurts you so. Give him up absolutely, and go away forever—not for a visit, not for a tour, but *forever*." I could feel Angeline wince. "We will close the house, and go away and *live*, or—you can make up your mind to marry the dreadful man, and take your chances of getting through the 'hurt' period. They say that sometimes when people are irretrievably mated they live through and down their former bickerings, and really have time and inclination to be nice to each other. I've read that marriage reverses one's temperament, in which case, certainly, you and your arbitrary lover stand a really splendid chance of a lamb-like existence together. But, Angeline, dear"—here my own memories clogged my throat—"don't think you love a man just because he hurts you more than any one else in the world can. I should be a great fool to call brandied cherries my favorite dessert, merely because they invariably give me the colic. But, Angeline," as her eager face grew drawn and white, "please make up your mind to do something. If you can't marry the disagreeable man you do love, why, marry some really pleasant fellow whom you don't."

"But, aunty," wailed Angeline, with the same monotonous tirade, "I tell you it's an impossible thing for me to marry either the man I love, or a man I don't love."

"Oh, hush!" I expostulated, and

was just about to shake her, when there was a step on the porch, and Dr. Hudson appeared. Both Angeline and I flushed, guilty with apprehension, but the young doctor seated himself very innocently in the Morris chair, and began to gaze at Angeline and talk to me.

Angeline's manner toward the doctor was always strangely deferential, and on this particular occasion it seemed to me that it partook startlingly of humility. The doctor certainly was "a splendid thing," as he stretched out in the Morris chair where you could readily forget his stooping shoulders and limping gait, and, as I watched his blazing dark eyes and his cynical mouth, I could readily understand that his nature must clash at a good many places against the nature of my wilful, madcap young relative. Yet there was something very compelling about that taciturn face.

After some moments of casual comment on weather and people, the doctor looked up, a trifle hesitatingly, and remarked, "There is smallpox in town. It has broken out at the mill. George Adams, the agent, has it."

"Oh!" gasped Angeline, with the sickening, clutching terror that all beautiful women feel toward that most mutilating of diseases.

"Why, what a pity!" I said. "It is a long time since we have had smallpox here. Who will take care of him?"

The doctor's forehead wrinkled in perplexity. "I don't know just what to do," he mused, with unusual friendliness. "I've got a nurse for him, and I guess the nurse will have to see it out alone. I want to do the right thing, but I don't see how I can give up my other patients for the sake of that one man. I've got some pretty critical cases on hand just now, and I feel I ought to stand by them. But it isn't that I'm afraid of smallpox." He laughed, grimly; and, indeed, there was no sign of either fear or repulsion on the man's face.

"I think you are doing perfectly right," I said, as I ripped my bungly sewing to pieces, and began over again,

with vague dreams as to the best material for Angeline's wedding gown; but, at my words of approval, Angeline jumped up, and turned a flamingly angry face to Dr. Hudson.

"I think you are the wickedest man who ever lived," she cried, in a passion, "if you let that smallpox person suffer and die with just an ignorant country nurse. You can find plenty of neighboring doctors to take your own critical cases, and do just as well as you could, so there! But there's no one but yourself who'll be willing to tackle the smallpox, and you know it." With which burst of temper, Angeline collapsed in her chair, and began to sob softly to herself.

If I had imagined for a second that the doctor would sear Angeline's ignorant sentimentality with a few scorching words, that bit of imagination was utterly routed, for he only got up very quietly, and remarked to Angeline, with almost pitiful gentleness, "All right; if you think that's what I ought to do, I'll do it," and turned away and left the house.

I was so provoked with Angeline that I let her sit and cry all the afternoon. I could have boxed her ears. I could have spanked her. I could have shut her up in the closet under the sink. But when I remonstrated with her at supper time, and told her what a wicked, medieval thing it was for a girl to send her lover into danger just for a test, she snapped her teary eyes at me, and remarked, with a coarseness that she certainly must have inherited from her mother's family, "The old fool! Does he think I like a man who can't cure anything but poison-ivy cases and croup?"

"Very well," said I, with ill-concealed disappointment; "it is perfectly evident to me at this moment that the minister is the man of your choice, and I must say that I consider you a very improper young person for a clergyman's wife. I had planned white chiffon and my mother's rose-point veil, for the doctor; but for a clergyman's bride, I think a simple gray alpaca would be best." With

which sally I retired to my room, and left Angeline, in amazement, to do the dishes.

At eight o'clock, the minister called, and he and Angeline settled themselves in the porch chairs just below my window. Heaven forgive me for my one offense of eavesdropping, but I did want to hear my young vixen get her "come-up-ance," and this is what I heard:

"It's a warm evening," observed Angeline.

"Yes," acknowledged the minister, "a perfect evening to come and sit outdoors with you, and talk hearts, instead of souls, for a change. That's a heavenly gown you have on. You are particularly adorable in pink muslin."

"This isn't pink muslin, it's pink organdie," said Angeline; "and there is smallpox in the village."

"What an irrelevant remark!" laughed the minister; "but, then, you almost always do change the subject when I say nice things to you. Never mind, I am good-natured. Who has the smallpox?"

"A man down at the mill, and Dr. Hudson, the *hero*, has gone to take care of him."

"I suppose a doctor gets well used to being a *hero*," volunteered the minister, in cautious compliment.

"No more used than any man ought to be," snapped Angeline, as though she herself had defied all the terror of the ages.

The minister mused a long time before he spoke again, and the moonlight on his face revealed a strange perplexity.

"I don't suppose Dr. Hudson needs any help," he finally stammered.

"Help!" cried Angeline. "Why, of course he does! A smallpox patient has to be dosed and fed, and bathed, and swathed, and oiled, night and day," she insisted, vehemently. "I read it in a book, and I think you'd better go right down to-night and help Dr. Hudson out. It may not take more than a few weeks, and you probably won't get the small-

pox yourself, and if you did it wouldn't matter, unless, of course, you died, for a minister doesn't have to be handsome as long as he's good——"

"Good Lord!" swore the minister, right out loud; but he got up, and commenced to pace the piazza. "Who'll take care of my parish?" he argued. "And, even if the parish can take care of itself, who'll preach for me?"

"You silly man!" laughed Angeline, with the first sign of merriment I had seen in her all day. "I'll take care of your parish; and as to preaching"—here she literally giggled—"if I couldn't preach as well as you can, I'd go off and die."

Then the minister laughed, albeit wryly. "All right," he said, "I'll go and help this wonderful *hero* of yours. But will you kiss me good-bye? It may be your last chance."

And Angeline, the scandalous little wretch, went up and kissed her clergyman right on his lips, and laughed as she did it, and told him to hurry off to Dr. Hudson.

And the Rev. Mr. Steele proceeded to hurry, but as he proceeded he turned for one second to Angeline, and the smile on his jolly face was strangely skeptical.

"Angeline," he observed, with an affectedly drawling accent, "you are either the bravest woman or the worst little flirt that the Lord ever invented."

To escape Angeline's presence, I hurriedly slunk into bed that night without my precautionary prayers, and closed my weary eyes with the conclusion that nothing short of spinsterhood and the state's prison awaited my brother's orphan child.

I consoled myself with the thought that the weeks which followed were no more pleasant to Angeline than they were to me. And, in addition to the monotony of a manless existence, Angeline had the added fear of contracting smallpox, and spent long hours with her hand-glass every day, watching for pock-marks, which she seemed to think were the very first

signs of the disease, and I did not enlighten her.

"If you *do* get sick," was my only comment, "there will be no doctor to cure you; and, if you die, there will be no minister to bury you. I shall have to do it all with these poor, feeble hands." Whereupon Angeline came and wept on my shoulder. Just how meek she grew to be you will understand when I tell you that in my own disquietude I finished her pink muslin frock with one sleeve upside down, and she wore it upside down without reproaches.

Angeline wept a good deal during the weeks of the smallpox scare, but, fortunately for the village, no other cases developed, and, fortunately for us, neither of our young friends contracted the terrible disease, but pulled themselves and their patient triumphantly through the danger, without disaster or disfigurement.

The delighted village, only too eager to welcome its heroes back to life, took occasion, as soon as quarantine was over, to enmesh the reluctant doctor and minister in plans for a social function such as our neighborhood had never yet experienced. The smallpox patient, George Adams, wisely escaped this function by leaving town, and doubtless, thereby, considered himself doubly fortunate; but the poor heroes were hemmed in at every turn, and were practically compelled, as it were, to step from the pest-house into a party.

As the plans for this first appearance of the heroes grew apace, and I beheld my drooping Angeline suddenly revive and begin to take a twittering interest in the proceedings, something within my life-long serenity snapped.

"Angeline," quoth I, on the very eve of the fête day, "it is an unseemly thing that you, who did your best to send two good men to their death, should now be making a frivolous rose-sprigged muslin in which to adorn yourself for a purely accidental resurrection."

"Yes, ma'am?" said Angeline, with an annoying upward inflection.

Now, that "Yes, ma'am?" on the top of everything else, irritated me beyond control, and I took hold of Angeline and shook her, and Angeline laughed, and that made me angrier; and I said, "Angeline, I positively forbid you to go to the lawn-party to-morrow." And Angeline, instead of "carrying on" and teasing, whispered, "All right," very quietly, and continued her sewing, until finally she looked up, and said, sedately:

"If I can't go to the party, I think I'd like to go to Springfield and visit Aunt Alice again."

"All right," I stormed; "go you shall, and go to-morrow morning."

And she went, with her rose-sprigged muslin, too, for we sat up almost all night to finish it.

The day of the lawn-party dawned bright and warm, and, though I missed Angeline sickeningly, I arrayed myself in cheerful garb at three o'clock, and hied me to the church grounds, where all the village and half the county were eating peanuts at the reluctant shrine of the doctor and the minister.

So many people questioned me about Angeline's absence that I began truly to regret that I had ever adopted her, and I invented so many emergency stories about Springfield that I began to doubt for myself if my gouty sister Alice would live through the night. And, in the end, the very excess of my lying bade fair to defeat my stern purpose of disciplining the young lady in question; for, full of eager inquiries and tender sympathy, the doctor and the minister both escorted me home through the night, and insisted upon sitting on my porch to smoke a peaceful cigar after the day's excitements.

"Where did you say Miss Angeline was in Springfield?" asked the doctor, kindly. "She's had so little experience nursing the sick! I want to go away somewhere for a few days' change, and I might as well go to Springfield."

"Do, do!" exclaimed the minister, gleefully; "come along with me. I've

just decided to run back to my old parish for a brief outing."

And, as my poor old eyes grew dim with tears of defeat, a boy on a bicycle came panting up with a telegram.

"Oh, take it!" I gasped, turning to the doctor in real terror. "It must be bad news from my sister."

With businesslike unconcern, Dr. Hudson tore open the yellow terror.

"It is not dated Springfield," he puzzled, "but it seems to be from Miss Angeline." And, like a thunder-clap, he read the following:

"Have done the impossible thing. George Adams and I were married this noon in my rose-sprigged muslin.

"ANGELINE."

"Well, wouldn't that—?" gasped the minister, as he hitched his chair backward off the porch, and fell, with a wild guffaw, into the pansy-bed.

But the doctor only stood up very tall and straight and grim in the

moonlight, and there was an expression in his eyes which I hope never again to see in those of any living creature. For a second, like one dazed, he rubbed his hand across his brow, and on that hand I caught the novel glint of Angeline's most treasured possession—the big seal ring her father left her when he died. Then, with a sudden shake of his shoulders, the doctor seemed to rally his faculties, and, turning to me, remarked, with ghastly quietude:

"I don't know what she means by 'the impossible thing,' but I sincerely hope that this is not bad news to you?"

Bad news or good news, what could I make of it, who never even heard of young George Adams until he had the smallpox? And Angeline, what about Angeline? She has certainly done the impossible thing; but, if you remember correctly, there were two impossible things; and how can I, though I live to be a thousand, ever be perfectly sure which one she chose?



O TEMPORA! O MORES!

HERE'S some advice: Don't feel too blue
 If down into 'her street' you roam,
 And find, as you will often do,
 Your maid of twenty "not at home."
 Trust to the ever happy sand
 That always slips the hour-glass through.
 Just wait till she is thirty—and
 You'll find that maid comes after you!



NEGLIGENCE

FIRST STAG—I hear poor Antlers was wounded.

SECOND STAG—Well, it was his own fault; he carelessly moved after the man took aim.

Jan. 1904

A BALLADE OF JEANNETTE

JEANNETTE has found another fad—
 She's joined the literary crew!
 More evanescent dreams she's had
 Than any girl you ever knew.
 But whatsoe'er she plans to do,
 No contradiction will she brook;
 And she assures me it is true
 That she's resolved to write a book!

Society and I are sad—
 She scorns our favors, and in lieu
 Thereof, she takes her scribbling-pad,
 The path of glory to pursue;
 Though from her head she cannot screw
 A plot, by any hook or crook,
 Her pencil she delights to chew—
 For she's resolved to write a book.

In ink-splashed cambric, now, she's clad;
 Her hair is plaited in a queue;
 Strictly *sub rosa*, I may add
 Her stockings are Bostonian blue;
 The shops, the play, the "private view"
 Now win from her no passing look,
 Nor will she listen when I woo,
 For she's resolved to write a book.

Girls, here's a splendid chance for you
 To take the place Jeannette forsook;
 I'm looking for a sweetheart who
 Has *not* resolved to write a book!

FRANK ROE BATCHELDER.



SUITABLE TEXT

"DR. THIRDLY is certainly an up-to-date clergyman," said Fosdick.

"So?" replied Keedick.

"Yes, sir. One of his parishioners was killed by the explosion of his automobile, and the doctor took for the text of his funeral sermon the Biblical account of Elijah going to heaven in a chariot of fire."

CELLES QUI SONT SEULES

Par Marie Petite

NONCHALAMMENT étendue sur sa chaise longue, Madame de Chagny, en confortable déshabillé orange, traite une très légère influenza; deux jours d'arrêt!

D'ailleurs, le temps n'est point engageant, le ciel est gris, chargé de neige, il en est déjà tombé la veille, et sur les boulevards, où on la fait fondre avec du sel, on patauge dans un mélange réfrigérant des plus désagréables. De sa fenêtre, elle aperçoit la longue silhouette noire des arbres du Luxembourg se découper dans un lointain ouaté de gris...

Décidément, tout est triste, et d'un geste d'oiseau frileux elle enfouit sa jolie tête dans les coussins, où sa chevelure blonde s'éparpille légère comme un fin duvet.

Oui, tout est triste, et Madame de Chagny qui connaît son Bourget sur le petit bout de son doigt mignon fait un rapprochement. Voilà le paysage de mon âme du gris, du noir dans une solitude lourde comme le ciel! Pourtant n'est-ce pas elle qui la choisit cette existence morne? Ne vient-elle encore de la dépouiller davantage, en se fâchant avec Madame de Lesmont, un ami fidèle des bons et des mauvais jours, avec celui qui depuis la mort de son mari l'a entourée d'un amour silencieux, sans exigence, se contentant d'un regard, d'un sourire, d'un geste!

N'avait-il pas supporté, durant ces quatre années, les caprices de son cœur et de son esprit, toujours à la recherche d'horizons nouveaux? N'avait-il pas entrepris patiemment la conquête de cette âme vagabonde, constamment embarquée pour "ail-

leurs," et qui n'avait jamais vibré à l'amour!

Non, elle n'avait jamais aimé! et c'était fini maintenant, bien fini, car elle allait avoir trente ans. Trente ans! Est-ce possible, avoir tant d'années et se sentir si jeune! Pourquoi ne portons nous pas l'âge de notre cœur? Elle se rappelait l'impression qu'à dix-huit ans elle se faisait d'une femme de trente: de grands enfants, un mari faible, des bandeaux plats, et pour toute distraction les confidences d'amoureux, des jeunes, qu'elle aurait écoutés et conseillés, en tricotant pour les pauvres, car elle était sûre, même vieille, de s'intéresser toujours aux choses de l'amour.

Et maintenant, arrivée à cette période de sa vie qu'elle entrevoyait alors si décolorée, si pleine d'occupations ennuyeuses et de passions raisonnables, elle n'avait ni enfant, ni mari; ses cheveux étaient toujours aussi fous et ne supportaient pas de bandeaux plats, qui auraient été fort mal d'ailleurs à l'air de son visage, et si parfois elle prêtait l'oreille à certaines confidences, c'est qu'elle y était particulièrement intéressée.

Sa situation de veuve et de jolie femme lui avait valu quantité de déclarations de toutes nuances, mais elle ne pouvait prendre au sérieux l'amour moderne, qui fait tout au plus aujourd'hui, comme le dit spirituellement Stendhal, bien monter à cheval ou bien choisir son tailleur, et c'est ainsi que cette exquise enveloppe de Parisienne cachait un cœur intact, un cœur neuf, qui jamais n'avait chanté la chanson divine. Elle se demandait pourquoi elle ne pouvait

pas comme ses amies, comme toutes celles qui l'entouraient, faire de l'amour un sport élégant et de bonne société, qui entretient un heureux équilibre entre les forces physiques et les aspirations morales, un exercice où il n'y a aucun danger de se rompre le cœur, et qui vous met en appétit pour bien apprécier les choses de la vie. Cela devait provenir autant de son éducation que de son tempérament sans doute.

Et elle revoit le château si triste où s'est écoulée sa jeunesse solitaire, élevée par une vieille tante portant l'éternel deuil de tous ceux qu'elle avait perdus.

Pauvre tante! Comme elle l'avait aimée, comme elle l'avait gâtée!...

Le jour qui s'obstinait encore à la dorure des cadres doucement, doucement s'est retiré comme sur la pointe des pieds, afin de ne pas troubler la jolie rêveuse. Dans le boudoir discret plane une atmosphère lourde de silence avec un parfum de foin fané. Des roses s'alanguissent dans un cornet de cristal et laissent tomber leurs pétales tristement comme dans une sépulture...

Madame de Chagny s'abandonne à la heure grise qui jette son charme mélancolique et troublant aux jeunes femmes solitaires et sentimentales. L'influenza a mis une pointe de fièvre dans son esprit qui vagabonde, tandis que ses membres, délicieusement las, semblent ne plus lui appartenir. Une phrase qu'elle a lue à seize ans, en déchiffrant l'opéra de la reine de chypre, lui revient avec la sensation d'alors. C'est celle de la chimère tentatrice: "Veux-tu (écoute, ô jeune homme, écoute) veux-tu divinement aimer?" Et elle revit l'émotion qui lui avait empourpré le visage et fait battre le cœur. C'est à cet âge que le fantôme de l'amour lui était apparu dans la haute stature du fougueux chevalier du Temple, un héros de Walter Scott qui dans Ivanhoé, brûle d'une passion coupable pour une belle juive, aussi belle qu'indifférente. Son imagination de petite fille romanesque en avait fait

un être mystérieux et terrible sous son armure qui le rendait impénétrable et moins curieuse, moins savante plutôt que Psyché, elle n'avait pas songé à lever le casque qui lui dérobait le visage de Templier. Elle aurait voulu vivre à cette époque et être aimée de lui! Il l'aurait emportée au milieu des cataclysmes épouvantables, des terreurs de l'inconnu et de la nuit, vers un point lumineux, un fanal qui brûlait très loin, très loin pour indiquer le salut ou le précipice, elle ne savait pas au juste, elle ne savait rien, mais dans cette chevauchée, éperdue, dans cette course à l'abîme, elle avait le frisson de la vie et de la mort...

Les hommes accusent volontiers les femmes d'être inconstantes en amour, pourtant les femmes restent éternellement fidèles à l'amour et aux premières sensations qu'il leur a données.

C'est ainsi que depuis bien des années Madame de Chagny avait complètement oublié la silhouette du chevalier qui avait occupé ses heures de rêverie dans le grand parc abandonné du château, mais elle avait conservé très nette la conception qu'elle s'était faite de son amour et les sensations initiales qu'elle en avait reçues et c'était cela, ces mêmes sensations, que plus tard elle avait voulu retrouver dans l'amour réel qu'on lui avait offert. La tentative avait été infructueuse. Pourquoi? Une question de Maupassant se posait à son esprit: "Aime-t-on parce qu'on rencontre une fois un être qu'on croit vraiment créé pour soi, ou bien aime-t-on simplement parce qu'on est né avec la faculté d'aimer?"

Était-ce la faculté d'aimer qui lui manquait? Pourtant son cœur était tendre, accessible à tous les sentiments. Elle avait pour Monsieur de Lesmont une très grande, une très profonde tendresse; elle lui reconnaissait un esprit fin, une intelligence supérieure, une âme noble et droite qui s'était donnée à elle dans sa plus haute, sa plus loyale, sa plus délicate expression.

Qu'attendait-elle pour combler son vœu et devenir sa femme? Elle était à l'âge où l'on abdique, à l'âge critique où la solitude devient effrayante, souvent dangereuse, et cette semaine, passée sans le voir, lui avait semblé interminable.

Avec lui, ce serait un bonheur calme, paisible, aujourd'hui pareil à demain, l'avenir sans surprise. Le courant de sa vie, un instant interrompu par la mort de son mari, reprendrait sa marche lente et silencieuse, au milieu du même paysage, un peu trop plat, et à la transparence de ce courant limpide, elle voyait les heures tranquilles s'amasser toutes pareilles, semblables aux cailloux que l'on aperçoit dormant au fond d'une source. Car elle avait pour Monsieur de Lesmont la même affection douce, fortifiée de la solide confiance et de la forte estime que lui avait inspirée également les qualités de cœur et d'intelligence de son mari.

Oui, il l'avait beaucoup aimée aussi son mari, et elle n'avait jamais pu combler le vide que lui avait laissé la perte de sa chaude protection... Maintenant, les deux hommes se confondaient dans le même sentiment, et il lui semblait qu'en se mariant avec Monsieur de Lesmont elle allait retrouver son mari après quelques années d'absence, et que son affection acquerrait plus de force et de tendresse... Il arrive toujours un moment dans la vie où l'on doit faire une transaction entre son rêve et sa destinée! Madame de Chagny ne paraissait pas suffisamment prête à cette transaction; elle se demandait si ce bonheur réel, à la portée de sa main, valait le sacrifice de la chère liberté qu'elle avait de rêver du bonheur à la mesure de son cœur.

Mais tout à coup le sommet de cette vie pâle et égoïste s'illumina d'une vive lumière: l'Enfant apparut auréolé de tous les amours. L'Enfant, le souverain but, la fin suprême, le divin refuge de la femme! Celui qui est véritablement l'os de ses os et la chair de sa chair; l'être créé pour elle, à qui elle insuffle son âme. Elle pourrait

avoir un fils!... et elle prêtait déjà à ce fils toutes les vertus, toutes les qualités de son idéal, et vers lui allaient se perdre, s'anéantir, comme les flots tumultueux d'un fleuve dans la mer, l'ardente passion, les tendresses innomées de cette pauvre petite âme de Parisienne frivole et douillette, que la moindre souffrance mettait aux abois, et qui voulait racheter son passé inutile et vain par la grande, la douloureuse maternité. Brusquement, Madame de Chagny se leva; d'une main nerveuse elle sonna la femme de chambre et demanda les lampes.

Assise devant son coquet secrétaire, un peu émue, mais très résolue, elle fait courir sa plume sur un carré de papier tendre et parfumé. Le parfum qu'il connaît bien, et dont il s'ennivra longtemps, longtemps, avant de lire la chère petite écriture fine et régulière, dont les lignes montent légèrement à droite...

AMI CHER,

Venez vite, j'ai l'influenza et me sens très mal à l'aise. Mon cœur aussi a pris froid dans cette atmosphère que vous ne réchauffez plus de votre chère présence. Venez, ma vie a besoin de la vôtre!... J'ai dit adieu à ce que vous appeliez "mes songes creux de petite fille," ou plutôt, je les ai transformés en de pleines réalités. Ne riez pas, monsieur le censeur, vous êtes le brave héros de mon dernier roman, le meilleur de tous ceux que mon imagination a créés, et près duquel les autres disparaissent pour toujours... Et ne trouvez pas que le mot brave, que j'ai placé avant héros est un qualificatif qui manque de sens en cette position, ô cher sage, qui voulez un sens à toutes les paroles que l'on prononce, car je vous investis le chevalier garde de mon esprit, avec son grain de folie, et de mon cœur, un peu gâté par le trop grand voisinage de mon esprit.

Mon âme s'envole vers vous! C'est un chemin bien connu d'elle celui qui conduit à la retraite mystérieuse que lui bâtit votre amour!... Elle frappe à la porte secrète, et écoute toute palpitante ce qui se passe à l'intérieur... Ouvrez lui et prenez là... Vous la sentirez battre de fièvre ainsi qu'un cœur d'oiseau effarouché... Elle est bien essoufflée, bien lasse d'avoir tant couru après toutes ses chimères! Elle veut se reposer ma pauvre âme et a choisi pour y vivre heureuse la retraite embaumée, le chaud foyer de votre amour...

A ce soir et à toujours,

LA VOTRE.

JUST JABBERY JINGLE

HUNGER jogs me now to jingle;
 Just some simple little thingle,
 From the page-top here to dangle,
 At the right and proper angle.

With the literature to mingle;
 Just a jolly, joyful jingle!
 Now, my blood is all a-tingle;
 And my nerves are all a-tangle;
 And my tuneful soul's a-wrangle
 With excruciating jangle.

Will the careless, merry throngle
 Think the ringle rude and wrongle,
 When my songle is all sungle,
 Dingle-dongle off my tongue-le?

They, perchance, will old shoes bringle,
 Eggs and bottles at me flingle!
 They, perhaps, my head will bangle;
 Spirit wound, and bonnet mangle!
 Would I were a bird on wingle,
 Would I were a kingly kingle,
 Any other bloomin' thingle,
 Not obliged to live by jingle!

Did *you* ever make a jingle?
 Will you tell me what to single?
 Will you tell me what you sangle
 When you you jingled out your jangle?

Fie! My silly head I'll hangle,
 And my pride forever strangle!
 Better honest ape in jungle,
 Rangle-tangles there amongle,
 Chattering chat, than thus to bungle
 Over just a jabbery jingle—
 Such a foolish little thingle!

AUGUSTA KORTRECHT.



LITTLE ROOM FOR DOUBT

ARTHUR—She dismissed me before I had finished proposing. Now I'll have to begin all over again.

JACK—Not necessarily. Try the widow. I think it quite likely she will let you begin where you left off.

HIS YOUNGER BROTHER

By Zoe Anderson-Norris

WHEN the surrey drove up to the hotel at Sand's Point with Miss Maynard on the back seat, Genevra, who had been standing on the veranda impatiently awaiting her arrival, gave a glad little cry. She ran down the steps, and offered her a helping hand to alight.

"I'm so glad you've come!" she exclaimed, rapturously. "I've engaged you a love of a room next to mine, with a door between that we can keep open or shut as we please. Come," running up the stairs, "I will show it to you."

Up-stairs, she threw open a door, and stood inside a room.

"Isn't it pretty?" she questioned. "Two wide windows looking out on the Sound and a breeze always blowing! And you are going to stay a week, aren't you? I'm promising myself it will be the week of my life. Let me help you off with your wrap. What a pretty thing it is! And your hat is a dream—so fresh from New York. When we stay down here by the Sound a while we lose our style, living in bathing-suits and short skirts. I'm afraid I am a freak. I have been here a month—so long that it is quite like home. I want to tell you something, though. Now that your hat is off, how pretty and yellow your hair looks! I had forgotten you had such yellow hair. Altogether, you are changed since our college days. But that is to be expected. Everything, everybody changes. Nothing remains the same. I think people change most of all, don't you? But this is what I wanted to tell you."

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She walked to the window, and looked out as she told it.

"It is about the Maclains. Two brothers they are, splendid fellows, both; Paul, the elder, and his younger brother, Jean. Not a child, by any means—that is, in years—he's twenty-two—but young in ways. They are alike, but not so very much alike, either. Paul is large, with broad shoulders and a heavy head of hair that gives him the look of a lion. His brother is smaller. You will notice Paul's hair at once—beautiful, thick, auburn. His brother's is the same color. Paul is a massive man, the sort of man women like. I am very fond of him, and I think," this with a blush, "that he is of me."

Here she turned her face away from the window toward her friend.

"We shall sit at the same table," she went on, "making a party of four. It will be great fun. I know you will like the brothers. It is impossible to do otherwise. Are you ready now? Wait, there is a little raveling on your skirt. Let me pick it off. There, it is dinner-time. Shall we go down?"

The two brothers were already at the table when the two girls entered the dining-room. After the introduction, Genevra, in a generous mood, placed her friend next to the leonine and splendid elder brother, taking a seat by the younger, Jean, who, in a spasm of delight, proceeded to tell her everything he knew in ten minutes, sprinkling such rare intervals as chanced to occur with laughter more or less hilarious.

By-and-bye, "Who are your friends

across the way?" he queried. "They don't seem to recognize us."

Genevra, glancing across, observed for the first time the absorption of the elder brother in her friend. She looked away from them somewhat blankly at Jean. Dessert over, he had arrived at the stage of the cigar. He took off the little emblazoned paper ring which bound it, and, in an elaborately ceremonious way, put it on her finger.

"Never mind," soothed he, "I am here. What do you care, so long as you have me? From now on," in a louder tone, "you and I are engaged to be married."

Genevra laughed a ripple of a laugh, at which Paul looked up.

"Genevra and I are engaged," explained Jean, in answer to the look. "At half-after four o'clock next Autumn we are to be married."

Disdaining to notice such palpable idiocy, Paul again turned his attention to Miss Maynard, with whom he kept up a rapid fire of conversation until they rose from the table and adjourned to the veranda, where, to Genevra's dismay, the four remained paired off as she had paired them.

Later, the good nights having been said, Genevra followed Miss Maynard into her room.

"What do you think of him?" she asked, toying indifferently with her handkerchief.

Her friend dimpled. "Magnificent," she replied.

Genevra half shut her eyes in a returning smile, and regarded the other, wondering how it happened that she had forgotten such fiendish prettiness, or had never before had the full extent of it thrust upon her. She made a little rush at Miss Maynard, kissed her fervently on both cheeks, then went into her own room, and shut the door between.

Throughout the week of her friend's stay, it seemed to Genevra that by the simple act of courtesy in giving her the place at table next the man who had exhibited some degree of fondness for herself before the friend's arrival, she

had placed her there for life. If the day happened to be clear and the Sound placidly glass-like, and they rowed in a boat to the opposite shore, it was Paul and Miss Maynard who sat near together, and she and Jean. If, on the contrary, the day were stormy, the Sound like oil, and the opposite shores gone out of sight altogether in a blinding mist, and they retired to the parlor for the purpose of passing away the time, Paul and Miss Maynard hastened to occupy a distant divan, while she and Jean played duets on a piano which was more or less disfigured as to quality of tone by the dampness of its environment.

In spite of her knowledge of the fact that the two sat rather closer together than was absolutely necessary in a retreat which might have been less dim, Genevra found amusement in the duets, and her laugh rippled. Upon one occasion, at a sudden and prolonged outburst of merriment, Paul rose deliberately, crossed the room, and put the piano down.

"You are making too much noise," he said.

There were tears in the eyes Genevra turned to Jean.

He quickly took a cigar from his pocket, slipped the little gay emblazoned ring therefrom, and, as before, placed it ceremoniously upon her finger.

"I see you lost the other one," said he, "or, maybe, it tore in two. They are rather fragile rings, when you come to think of it. What do you care, sweetheart, when you are mine? Have you forgotten that we are to be married in the Autumn?"

All of which was so deliciously droll that Genevra laughed again as, placing a boyishly protecting arm about her waist, he led her from the room.

Outside, he proffered further explanation.

"The difference in size," he brooded, "is the only reason I don't lick him." Presently, however, "You've got to be ordinarily polite to a man who is paying your hotel bill," he added, with an attempt at airiness.

The week dragged leadenly. After each day Genevra thought she beheld new beauties, fresh witcheries in the friend. Her skin was like the little shells cast up by the waves, her eyes blue as skies, each tooth a tiny pearl set exquisitely and perfectly—so perfectly that Genevra found herself wishing that some not quite fatal thing might happen to her so that she would have to go on home. Nevertheless, outwardly keeping up every semblance of the old and ardent friendship, Genevra conducted the good nights with endearing words and kisses quite as fervent, if not more so, than formerly; but back of the closed door between the two rooms, she smothered sobs in her pillow, and strangled tears.

At length, it ended; she saw Miss Maynard seated safely in the hotel surrey bound for the station and New York, watched the last twirl of her stylish white veil as that vehicle rounded the curve of the long gray road; then, turning large-eyed and wistful, she faced the elder brother.

"Well?" said she.

He descended the steps of the veranda.

"Come with me," he commanded.

For a space, arrived at the beach, they walked in silence. Then, "The way you have flirted with Jean during the past week," he declared, in the firm, round, decisive tones naturally belonging to such a frame, "has been simply atrocious, not to say scandalous."

Genevra opened wide, glad eyes. Suddenly, as if by magic, the Sound changed its aspect, and sunshine rippled all along each little wave.

"From the first evening at dinner," he continued, frowningly, "when you allowed him to perpetrate the idiocy of putting that little paper engagement-ring on your finger, your behavior has been past the comprehension of people who are sane."

In spite of the fact that it was broad daylight, Genevra took his hand and laid it tenderly against the down of her cheek.

"Was that why?" she asked, softly.

His answering voice was tender as her caress.

"That was why," said he.

It was late, and Genevra stood at the window of her room, restlessly happy. A great, gold moon hung over the Sound, flanked by a second moon glowing in the water.

Opening her door, she ran swiftly down the stairs into the dimly lighted hall out on the veranda, thinking to cure her restlessness by a stroll on the beach in the light of the moon.

The long veranda faced the moon and the Sound, and on the top step there sat alone a boyish figure, the head buried disconsolately in the curve of an arm.

Genevra, crossing noiselessly, went down a step or two, stood before the boy, and, with gentle hands, lifted up his head. The moonshine disclosed tears on the lashes.

"Jean," she questioned, wonderingly, "what is the matter?"

Drawing his hand across his eyes, he dashed away the tears.

"Nothing," he said.

NO END IN SIGHT

FORRESTER—I suppose you married to complete your education?

LANCASTER—No; merely to continue it indefinitely, it seems.

ROSEMARY AND RUE

WITHIN the leaves of Memory's book
 I see, through blur of tears,
 Your gage—a little withered spray,
 Brown with the stain of years,
 Yet subtly sweet as breath of spring,
 When love to youth appears.

O friend, if time and place must hold
 A bar between us two,
 If you may never see my face,
 Nor I touch hand of you,
 Beside your sprig of rosemary
 I lay my sprig of rue.

ROSALIE ARTHUR.



NOT GOING TO PLEASE HER

WIFE—Now, you are not going to quarrel with me, are you, dearest?

HUSBAND—No. You might as well prepare yourself for a bitter disappointment.



TROUBLE AHEAD

HE—I am in love and am engaged.

SHE—You ought to be very happy.

"I don't think so. It isn't the same girl."



THE WRONG PLACE

YOUNG MAN—Aren't you sorry that I am going to marry your sister?

CLARENCE—No, sir. I haven't any sympathy to waste on you.

THE CZAR

By John Regnault Ellyson

FIGG, Gretter and Latouche—each of them was a very well-known figure. Latouche might at a glance have been easily mistaken for an ambassador. He was really a tailor, though far from being the ninth of a man; scarcely one man in a few thousand could compare with him in physique.

"Born in Paris, and bred in Andova"—thus Gretter once hit off his portrait and his history at the same time—"this Apollo of the needle, possessing American tricks and a French eye, rose from the bench with a tape around his neck, and now, look you, how he clothes himself royally and how he dresses every mother's son of the Gilded!"

Plummer Gretter was less conspicuous in person and as a public servant. Within the coop of *The Insurance Advocate* he wrote editorials "bristling with deadly statistics," as Figg remarked, "and things of alarming dryness." Among convivial souls on the corners, in the theatre-lobbies and at the clubs, he was a courted companion, a diverting wag, sometimes genial, sometimes satirical.

Figg, more accomplished and more versatile, just escaped being famous. "But the fool," said his friend, "chose the way of the fool—he buried himself here in Andova." Small, particularly uncomely, yet suave and nimble-witted, he was the lessee of the Academy; he was an unfortunate manager, a passable playwright and an excellent comedian.

"I should like Figg better if he didn't carry his art into the street," said his friend. "Ah, do you see?—he puts his

worst face forward, and goes about with his nose painted!"

His nose and his other comic features were certainly much in evidence.

Figg, with his comrade, Gretter, coming up-town one morning last Fall, halted near a spot sufficiently familiar to lovers of choice styles, and greeted Latouche, who stood on the door-sill of his establishment. Latouche advanced a step or two, and extended his smooth, white hand that the comedian cordially pressed.

"My fashionable friend," said Figg, without a shade of irony in his tone, "ah, it's always a pleasure, I assure you."

"Now, have a care—have a care," cried Gretter, softly, in an absurd whimper—somehow dovetailed between the two. "Lord! am I to be killed in a rush, in the meeting of my twin gods—betwixt the little and the great—he who robs me of my jokes, and he who warms me with goodly raiment——?"

"Excuse my young man," said Figg; "he's on his stilts again."

Latouche had begun laughing jovially.

"He talks like a poet made in the mode," said he.

"In the mode—I like that," rejoined Gretter, twitching his mouth as if tasting the phrase; "in the mode—it savors of the 'goose,' and it has a touch of the trade."

"All honor to Latouche's heart," Figg interposed, "for he who loves his trade thrives——"

"If he has many patrons and few friends," added Gretter. "However, I must tell you, monsieur, that poets

and jesters, it is understood, are born, not made. And I cite your case, Figg. Look at him, Touche-ie! Who would have had the madness to make Figg as he is—the image of a mishap and a misfit? No, no—he wasn't made. He was conceived in sin and born so! But here—here's Tom Mabin. And here's a nice question, too: How does a financier get into the world—is he made or born or hatched out of a pocket like a 'possum?"

The question was not settled.

Latouche wheeled around slowly, and Figg approached the banker, whose grave face lightened as he raised his eyes.

"You see, Mr. Mabin, I don't run shy of my creditors," said Figg. "I leave the arm of one to press the hand of another."

"You're a brave lad," said the banker, his eyes twinkling.

"A brave Aladdin, who rubs his Wonderful Lamp," said Gretter, his finger on his nose, "and then up comes——"

"The fellow with a laugh! Plummer, boy, do you ever have the blues?"

"Do I? Never so long as a joke remains. Apropos—did I tell you the countess story?"

"Give us a good one, Plummer," said Latouche, advancing, "and one I may tell my lady."

"Oh, surely! When a man's a trump card in a deal he smiles and tells his wife—it's good he should. In fact, gentlemen, the affair of the countess concerns this Monsieur Touche-la, himself, and dates back to the time he revisited Paris—alone, last Spring. And why alone? 'Oh, grandmama, what makes your eyes so big?' 'To see the better, my dear.' And he did. He see-sawed through all the shops and all the snares—everywhere, up and down, in and out—by night and day; and one night, at the artists' ball, he met the Countess Pied-d'Oiseau——"

"I did attend the ball, but I don't remember——"

"Ah, he is modest now, and he was modest then! The countess, it seems, took him for what he was—the love-

liest fellow there—and she hung upon him like a pretty bunch of burrs. No matter how they got into it, but the garden was below, and the nooks were shady. You must know that the countess, by all reports, had the daintiest pair of arms in the world—though one was artificial; and so," said Gretter, "the other made monsieur very warm, and this one made him shiver——"

Latouche's cheeks had pinked, and the banker's eyes were glowing, when Figg vigorously seized the tattler.

"One moment, Plummer, one moment," he cried.

"Vandal! you are spoiling a story."

"Look, what's that across the street—yonder, by the barber-pole?"

Gretter glanced over his shoulder, and chuckled.

"I've been telling you about him for the last week."

"Jesting aside," said Figg.

"Well, put jesting aside and take him in, old bird, bit by bit."

"I say——"

"You don't listen to what I say—use your eyes!"

"But who—who the mischief is he?"

"The Czar!"

The banker raised his glasses.

"Eh?—indeed, a deucedly queer chap," he said.

"Yes," observed Latouche, who was at his sleeve, "every day he walks by here, and big and little come out to see him pass."

"Truly, I never saw the like!" exclaimed Figg, still watching the moving figure.

"Yet he's about your size," said Gretter, with a cackle, "and almost as handsome."

"Ha, ha! look, Plummer! His gait is absolutely wooden—inimitably so."

"You've been from home a long while, Figg; perhaps he's one of your foreign cousins."

"Cousin—the devil!" said Figg.

"My cousin, the Czar,' sounds better."

"Apparently, he doesn't see any-

body," remarked the banker, "but everybody turns. There!—the ragged little brat following him has caught his strut. People are laughing, but he goes on unconcerned. Truly, a queer fellow."

"Yet a man of some taste," observed Latouche.

"Is he a patron of yours?" asked Gretter, quickly.

"No—but he dresses well."

"Yes, that's so," said Gretter; "he's clean as a stick and prim as a corpse."

"A model and unique," muttered Figg, half aloud, wholly absorbed in the study of his subject. "Oh, if I could mimic that ambling swagger!"

And with the wish to try rather than with the hope of succeeding, the comedian walked off a space and, advancing toward the group, reproduced very fairly the eccentric movement. The banker clapped his hands, and Latouche uttered a bravo.

"But where," demanded Figg, eagerly looking from point to point across the way, "where's my man gone?"

"He turned the corner to avoid his rival," said Gretter.

"Figg," said the banker, "your hero's ready at hand—produce a drama."

"Say, am I losing my color, Plummer?"

"A hot punch will revive you!"

"But a play will put you on your feet," said Tom Mabin. "You have a character that will fill all ends of a comedy or a three-act farce—write the play, and take the leading rôle, and then," continued the banker, laying his hand on Figg's shoulder, "then, if it's neatly done, I promise I'll cancel last year's note."

"Tom, dear Tom—"

"Well, Plummer?"

"While your heart, Tom, is wide open, remember my little note."

"Agreed—if you give Figg any good suggestion or—"

"Bear you witness, gentlemen, and I'll begin now—I'll name the play!"

"It ought to be in the prevailing fashion," said Latouche.

"Oh, you want a title within a title—a lord, a duke, a prince—"

"Something of the sort, but what?"

"This—'The Czar Incognito.'"

"That's the top notch," cried Figg, "the top notch and the real thing."

"It sounds well," said Latouche.

"And so it suits you, Figg?" asked the banker.

"Admirably—most admirably!"

Gretter put on the mincing airs of his comic friend as when recalled before the footlights; he smiled, and said:

"Thanks, gentlemen, thanks! You are kind—but enough; our vanities must not interfere with the stage business. Tom," he added, slipping his arm into the banker's, "I'll go down with you now, and see after my little note. Come, Figg, we'll punch you as we go. Latouche!—no?—then, monsieur, ta-ta!"

II

"THERE isn't much of him, but he's immense." Gretter had so proclaimed, and people had echoed the phrase. He had been seen—here and there, again and again. He had received an august title from the wags. He had been more or less seriously considered as the central character in a play. But who was the man? What were his qualities? Did he have any aim or mission? Why was he so grim and yet so serene? Had he a great crime behind him, a great career, or simply the Monte Carlo tables? How could he be at once so droll and so haughtily indifferent to sentiments expressed? Was he American or English or Continentally European—a fungous millionaire, a grandee honored in his own country, or a valet who had borrowed his master's manners? Did anybody know? Inquiries had, of course, been frequently made, but, it must be owned, unsatisfactorily answered.

For a brief period each day, he promenaded in the parks or on the public streets. He attracted extraordinary attention. He was clearly no common freak, and certainly he was no

professional buffoon. Strange to say, a single glance from the most heedless or the most incurious never sufficed. Everybody, who once saw him as he approached, invariably turned as he passed and looked a second time. Observers often paused suddenly, and stood still and wondered. Most of them smiled; with some it was difficult to resist laughing heartily. It was all one, however, whether they looked or smiled or laughed outright. The remarkable individual, with a presence that distracted the eye and an air peculiarly his, seemed neither to see nor to hear anything that ruffled his serenity. He came and went—as a change comes, as an hour goes. When he chose to exercise the privilege alike of citizen or stranger, he sauntered through the avenues seemingly for his mere personal pleasure, and under no circumstances interfered with the amusement of others—even if conscious of it.

His visit, in the opinion of many, was opportune. The excitement over the missing ex-mayor and his scandalous record having recently subsided, the Andovans were languishing for a novelty of some kind, and they found interest, if not a genuine, clearly defined sensation, in the new unknown. He had been in town for two or three weeks, and half Andova had surveyed him from some standpoint, compared notes and passed comment.

Now, as a fact, the serious were as piquantly affected as the frivolous. Numbers of such cases were daily talked of. To mention a single instance only, it was said that a reputable, grave judge, who had taken a fresh burden upon himself in middle life and never laughed after his marriage, was so convulsed at the sight of him that he could not recover his wits, and abandoned the bench. It was added very graciously that the judge had caught a glimpse of him at the feet of madame, the judge's wife.

The rumor, or at least a part of it, was traced to the gay malignants. A sincere student of nature, anxious to get somewhere near the truth, button-

holed the captain of this jolly crew; but, when asked touching the matter, Gretter assumed the posture of one who could not be surprised and could not be cornered.

"Why do you come to me?" he asked. "I don't write history, and I don't cite authorities. If I wrote history, I should do so in such a vein that nothing else would be read."

The student nodded, being convinced of that, and Gretter continued:

"I am an episodist, and I boast of no other talent. An episodist, that is, pure and simple. I merely repeat what I have been told, or what I find sketched in the air. I've no reason for believing the details you speak of, and less reason for denying them. You can see that the judicial head has been turned, and the wits scattered. You can see how young madame is, how bright, clever, handsome. You can see, also, day after day that women as well as men always take a second glance at the Czar, and always smile. What's your conclusion? The dear creatures often become sentimentally disposed, don't they? Rather improbable in this case, you think? Still—well? Aren't there deeps beyond deeps in the sex divine? Yes. Does any man honestly know what is improbable while such a thing is conceivable? There may be conditions which you and I don't properly regard, or some subtle attraction or magnetism which you and I don't feel."

The student checked the wandering episodist by saying: "You have heard that the Czar's name is Brown?"

"Brown! Brown!" Gretter indignantly exclaimed, and then demanded: "If you were to discover a new star in the heavens would you call it—Brown?"

"No, I should name it Gretter!"

"So?—hang it! now ask me for my watch," said he, "and it's yours."

"Instead, let me ask you for an off-hand picture of the Czar."

"Are you dreaming? Describe the indescribable—pack a live phenomenon in words? You'll excuse me. No, sir; it's been tried at times in con-

versation and in print. All efforts fail; you have everything but the man as he is. Can any tongue or pen give a just idea of a phoenix or a dragon? He could be painted; even then much would be missing. Better send people here—he should be seen.”

The student, nevertheless, placed his note-book on his knee, and jotted down these items:

“He should be seen, as Gretter says. He glides by at an unhurried gait, moving angularly, with singular stiffness. One might assert that, like the historic duke, he came into the world scarce half made up. He lacks grace of action, comely features, symmetry and height. He is five feet four inches. His body seems too long for his legs, his arms too long for his body. The shoulders are raised or hunched, and the feet preposterously slued. His profile forms the back of a crescent. The sloping brow and receding chin give prominence to the unequivocally Roman nose. He has pale eyes like agates, dark red hair, a mottled complexion. Neither mustache nor beard is worn. Bony and meager, his face narrows sharply toward the jaw, while at the temples it is hardly so wide as the outer lens-edge of his eye-glasses. The immobility of his countenance and his somewhat proud carriage, as much as aught else, distinguish him from his fellows. He dresses in style. Indeed, whatever the color and texture of his vest and coat and trousers, they are faultless in make, and faultless, too, are the curve of his collar, the shape of his hat, the shade of his gloves. He appears frequently at noon, and again in the evening of the same day, in different attire, each equally fresh and equally appropriate.”

The student, then, submitted the note-book to Gretter, who ran his eye along the lines, and wrote at the end of them:

“About as interesting as an unpaid grocer’s bill. This may be Brown, but it isn’t the Czar.”

The day after Gretter and the student met and conversed and parted without being exactly pleased, two well-known ladies visited several houses in the midmost section of the city, and among these the boarding-place where Mrs. St. Denis held sway, and where the Czar lodged. Theirs was a grand tour of investigation, but what was gathered at The Fawn and what was conjectured may best be epitomized.

Naturally, there was but one topic—

the stranger. Mrs. St. Denis admitted that she did not quite understand her guest—scarcely surprising, since no one did. He went by the name of Andrew Brown, as the matron carelessly remarked, and the gossiping ladies concluded at once that this was an assumed name. The surmise was absurd, Mrs. St. Denis explained; on the night of his arrival, he had presented a letter of introduction from one of her dearest friends in Washington. From Washington!—but where had he previously hailed from? New York. That proved nothing; as everybody goes to New York, everybody may come from there. But had he means? Presumably. And what did he do to occupy his time? He ate and drank and dressed. Mrs. St. Denis was thought to be dull—of course, he ate and drank and dressed. Some had supposed him to be dumb—why, certainly not, and madame’s cheeks dimpled. Was he intelligent, clever, much of a talker? She had found him a man of sense, a very quiet, entertaining gentleman.

“Ah!” they murmured.

Inquisitive souls who question and prattle occasionally so express themselves, and they mean more than could well be said. In the present case it amounted to this: “Surely we have scented an affair. She finds him entertaining—the idea! She is thirty and a widow—a widow with two children. They are pretty, but she? She has eyes sufficiently striking, but a predisposition to leer, and fine teeth—too fine not to be false. And her hair—in what a girlish fashion she does it up! The Carmencita rose, too, how entirely out of date! She has positively changed her manner; she talks so little. Do you observe?”

“Ah!” exclaimed the ladies again, and doubtless they observed a good deal more than was worth observing.

Perhaps, after all, a fellow-boarder at The Fawn threw most light on the subject, and, as it happened, it was Gretter with whom he chatted.

The fellow-boarder did not consider Brown “so extremely odd” as at first. In some particulars, he was rather like

other men and better than most men. He had excellent habits—"a clean creature who rises early, attends to his own concerns, appears promptly at meal-times and commonly remains indoors at night." Though much to himself, he was never morose, never churlish. He was reserved in a degree, and generally cool in his manner, but social enough among those he came in contact with daily. In truth, he was careful of proprieties, even-tempered, seemingly well-bred.

The fellow-boarder could not say whether or not any attachment had sprung up between Mrs. St. Denis and Mr. Brown. He could be seen often in her company, but others were always present. He was fond of her beautiful children, and fed them on bonbons.

In the house there was a talented young girl who performed on the violin, and he seemed to take great delight in her music. The mother of the girl spoke of him in the highest terms, as did the jocular, deaf old gentleman, Mrs. St. Denis's cousin, with whom he played checkers when the weather was unfavorable for a stroll. Dr. Moran, who had offices in the basement of the house, and who dined there, made everyone smile once by asserting that Brown was "a most robust piece of pure anatomy," and then adding, really what he meant was that Brown had "the vitality and vigor of an eagle." The old French lady, another guest, took unaccustomed interest in him; she loaned him the latest imported novels, and familiarly talked over foreign news. She constantly quoted Brown.

"You must admit, madame," the deaf gentleman remarked, one evening, "that your friend is utterly destitute of humor."

"You say the same of me, monsieur," the old French lady replied, "because I do not comprehend what you call your 'puns.'"

"In fact," added the fellow-boarder, speaking of this, "I think Mr. Brown never laughs at anything."

"It isn't his fault," said Gretter; "it's owing to the cut of his face."

III

Two months later, an altogether new, charming and original extravaganza was announced. It was entitled "The Czar Incognito." It would be produced at the Academy during Christmas week. Figg, in his capacity of playwright, had already finished the masterpiece, and Figg, in his capacity of comedian, would immortalize himself as the hero. This was advertised at large in the journals, and red-lettered on the boards. The papers commented on the forthcoming play with approval; they fully acknowledged its merits; they predicted a flattering success, and spoke of "brilliant accessories, much pungent satire and surprising developments of a highly ingenious plot."

Though they did not afford a complete analysis of description, their vague hints and suggestions and assurances had the effect of whetting the interest of all. The flaming lines of the bill-boards set forth more astonishing promises, and the fancy of the people could, besides, read what it pleased between the lines, which, however, were pregnant enough and luminous in themselves.

The Academy, closed on Friday and Saturday for rehearsals, was opened on the following Monday for the initial public performance. On that occasion, every seat was occupied; the outer aisles were thronged. Beauties, notable people, political rivals, merchants, folk representative of all professions filled the body of the house; a mass of animated faces looked down from the galleries. The mood of the audience was unmistakably fraternal and gay.

After a lively overture delightfully rendered by the orchestra, the curtain rose on the first scene of the first act. A picturesque rabble gathered in the streets of Moscow. News had reached there that the Czar had disappeared from St. Petersburg. It was a case of kidnapping, not one of assassination. This time the gipsies were implicated, not the Nihilists. Rumors spread;

details multiplied. Moscow was, even now, being searched; in the distance could be heard the beating of drums.

Then, there were shouts of laughter and a wild hubbub of applause. The hero entered. He was unattended, save by a colossal valet. He resembled somewhat the fantastic corsair of comic opera. He was as immaculate as a bit of Dresden ware, and wonderfully decorated. He wore priceless laces, white satin trousers, an embroidered, blue-silk jacket and a kind of turban tipped with a sweeping plume of snowy feathers. He had eye-glasses on his high-bridged nose, and an ivory-handled poniard in his crimson sash. Nevertheless, in figure and in manner and in voice he was none other than Brown—the comedian's conception of Brown, capitally well presented.

It was an infinitely funny rôle that the comedian played. Hopelessly enamoured, the hero followed a beautiful, dark-eyed, red-tressed gipsy, light-limbed and fleet of foot. Everywhere she led him an unending dance. He squandered coin and jewels, accepted no defeat, hesitated at nothing. Always found where he should not have been, he was never just in the place you anticipated. Always stupendously serious, he yet never failed in exciting the most immoderate mirth. He got into strange entanglements, met with successes that proved only new snares, and at points when misfortune seemed inevitable he came off luckily, but with insignificant trophies—with a lock of red hair, a pinchbeck ring at the end of a ribbon or a slipper run down at the heel.

His apostrophes to these objects set the house wild. He was grimly in earnest, manifestly bewitched and transported, but in his most ecstatic moments he never smiled. Indeed, throughout the evening, the expression of his countenance did not once vary.

On the other hand, at every appearance, there were changes in his attire. These were chameleonic, dazzling. They were only changes of the skin, however. The personality remained

the same—the individual figure, the voice, the manner.

The scenes, shifting now and again, were so many diverting situations, brisk turns and surprises. Before the curtain fell, the gipsy-chief suddenly recognized the Czar in the person of the hero, but the Czar was intoxicated and unable to recognize anybody, even his charming mistress.

He was a picture in himself. Sitting on a stool, alone in the foreground, he was dangling a pillow on his knees, and raising his eyes to heaven.

The first act having been full of bustle and excitement, the second act, by way of contrast, was full of a certain repose. There were two scenes, both in the gipsy quarters of Moscow. But nothing was squalid, nothing unsightly. The interiors, thanks to the lavish hand of the lover, or, rather, to the tricks of stage-craft, were Orientally sumptuous. They might have been taken for places in the land of Cognac, for vistas in an after-dinner doze. Some spirit of the dainty and the genial prevailed. There was beauty. There were superb groupings. There were comely women richly arrayed. There were light entertainments, including wire-walking, tumbling and novel feats of jugglery. There were sounds of guitars and tambourines, songs and choruses and dances. The movement of the whole act was idyllic, dreamy, graceful and poetic. The Romany girl, like a Columbine under a spell, had become reconciled to fate. She was playfully tame and kittenish, and, for a season, the hero was happy. Ever and anon, the love element came up, but with less buffoonery, though the lover, of course, was fearfully droll. He was caressed and adored, kept pleasurably half-dazed with wine, and imprisoned as if in enchanted circles.

Toward the close of the last scene, another discovery was made.

The mother of the gipsy girl, having slipped in unobserved among the dancers, caught sight of the tell-tale

lines in the hero's palm. She struck an attitude, and produced a tableau.

"Look!" she cried, pointing to the lover, "this is not the Czar, but the Prefect of Police!"

In the third act, the flurry and agitation were renewed. Everything moved at a quickened pace and with exhilarating dash. The gipsies had taken flight; they revered the monarch, but they detested the police. The humor ran in a vein of broad burlesque; it was exceedingly varied and free and stirring and jovial.

The lover, abandoned, began a series of still more whimsical adventures in search of his idol. She was now quite near at hand, and then very far away, often seen by glimpses and often missed by less than a moment's delay. He was almost constantly in hot pursuit. Did he sleep on his ear as he rode? What sustained him—love or a witch's philter or invisible wings? We saw him only when he paused, and, as he paused only to eat, to drink and to dress, it was at these intervals that the colloquies were so bright and sharp, the situations so spicy and the fun and by-play so uproarious. Each scene seemed more novel than the other, more audacious and more farcical.

The hero's huge valet, at last, became the little hero's rival. The fluttering damsel, being captured, sulked and moaned in her gilded cage until she found a means of escape by setting her heart on the villain whose ruses had made her captive—the villain-valet. It was she who wooed, and it was he who yielded. He substituted the mother for the girl, betrayed his master, and walked off under his very nose with the dainty, fickle, red-crested humming-bird in one of the long pockets of his storm-coat.

However, the scales soon fell from the hero's eyes, and he tragically ran his head against the walls, against the pillars, against the door-jambs, but this, instead of having a fatal result, jostled his brains so happily that he immediately saw things in a new

light. He saw the handsome mother of the wayward beauty. She regarded him tenderly; she spoke with soothing sweetness. He looked again and lost his heart, sank into her ample arms, and confessed his love.

He confessed, also, that he was neither the Czar nor the Prefect of Police, but a baker of St. Petersburg, who, inheriting an enormous fortune, had resolved to spend it like a prince.

"And so you shall," whispered the lady.

"Yes, my dear madame—and, if you please, now let us retire. All ends well when love ends all. One way and another. I have been a little knocked about—a little bruised; but, thank God! I am still alive."

They retired, and reappeared a dozen times before the curtain.

There was no doubt as to the sentiment of the house.

"Father," remarked Tom Mabin's pretty daughter, reproachfully, "you have behaved shamefully—shocking!"

"Well, my dear," the banker replied, "forgive me; I haven't been doubled up so since Ned Sothern died!"

"Surely a piece out of the whole cloth and a very fine piece," observed Latouche, as he confronted Gretter in the lobby.

"As a general thing," said Gretter, "I don't like figs, but this one is delicious!"

IV

No great while after the curtain went down on the closing scene of Figg's play, a drama of a different stamp was produced at a point not far from the Academy. In fact, the bells at midnight, it may be said, sounded the end of the extravaganza and the beginning of a realistic drama.

At a few minutes of twelve, a fire broke out in a house which, directly in the rear of The Fawn on the corner of Vine and Marshall streets, had once been used as an annex to that building. In the work of incendiaries for the purpose of looting the adjacent dwellings,

there was a miscalculation; it occurred an hour too late or an hour too early. The flames, originating in the untenanted house, ate their way rapidly through the ground floor into the larger structure. The guests of Mrs. St. Denis were not numerous, and most of them, sight-lovers and pleasure-seekers, were at the Academy, as was the lady herself.

A band of boyish serenaders discovered the fire, turned in the alarm, and made the night ring with their cries. The neighborhood was soon aroused. At The Fawn, the servants appeared one by one in a helpless and completely dazed state. A lad and his mother, the latest arrivals, were the first to leave the house. A young doctor and his friend, Dr. Moran's assistants, jumped from a window over the porch, and both were injured. The old French lady in her gown and slippers, and with a poodle and a bird-cage, bundles and boxes, reached the pavement by the aid of the butler and her maid, and, though never in any imminent danger of losing her life, breathlessly recounted her perils. The old deaf gentleman, the last of the guests, was, however, brought from his room on the basement floor in an insensible condition. Parts of the main staircase were then in flames, and the air was dense and stifling.

By this time, the streets were filled. Well-nigh the entire Academy audience flocked there. The police and the firemen arrived in inconsiderable numbers—the reels, also the smaller trucks and the engines. There were conflicts between the police and the crowd, much ill-directed activity and uncommon excitement and confusion. A second alarm sounded, but for some reason the principal hook-and-ladder carriage did not respond to either signal.

Meanwhile, the comparatively short ladder, first run up against the side-wall of The Fawn, near the annex—the roof of which smoked and the windows of which were now ablaze, was hurriedly withdrawn and raised farther toward the front of the house. Pre-

cisely at this point occurred one of those striking and peculiar episodes, none the less thrilling because so brief or because immediately preceded by a somewhat ludicrous incident.

The top of the ladder reached halfway to the crown of the second-story window, and two men crawled up, dragging a black line of hose, followed by a sinewy man of ample build, easing the line. Some on the street recognized the third man as Jack Bull, "a good fellow to have with you in a tight place." They observed that he remained at the level of the sill, handling the hose after his comrades had entered.

They observed, too, that a fourth man now mounted the ladder. He was diminutive, lean, stiffish in action, and yet he moved briskly. He was nicely groomed and fastidiously dressed, and the fireman above, seeing him so utterly out of place, waved him back.

He continued to mount. When at close quarters, hot words were exchanged, words that could not for the noise be intelligibly heard on the street—a series of hisses and growls such as might have passed between a fierce cat and a big dog.

But the people could see, if they could not understand. The glare from the windows of the annex lighted up the figures—the athlete and the foppish puppet at his feet. They saw the rough face of the one, and the meager features of the other, and the glasses on his thin, hooked nose.

Many fresh from the Academy exclaimed:

"Why, that—that's Figg!"

One individual, however, if no one else, expressed himself differently.

"Hello! what have we here?" cried Gretter; "John Bull and the Czar!"

Gretter was right; it was not Figg—it was he whom the comedian had impersonated.

The little man, barred in his direct passage, slipped to the under side of the ladder, and mounted. What next happened, happened while one might snap his fingers twice. Brought face to

face, the athlete thrust his hand out and clutched at the man's collar, but the little fellow swung back a space, gave a spasmodic jerk of the head, straddled the hose, and rolled through the window.

"Ah, did you see?" exclaimed Greter; "he spat in his eyes."

The big chap, laughing at the device, wiped his face with his sleeve, and clumsily leaped in after the trickster.

In a moment, again coming in view, and with a man under his arm—one of those who had gone in with the hose and who had been disabled—he gained the ladder and descended, placed his companion in the care of others, and remounted. When near the middle of the ascent, he heard calls from below, caught the words, and raised his eyes. Suddenly, he tossed off his helmet and coat, and tightened the belt about his blouse—no one knew exactly why.

The people in the street were watching a window on the fourth floor—the window twelve or fifteen feet above the top of the ladder. Lights had flashed in the room, making a ruddy glow as if a trap or a door had taken fire, and then the lights had faded. The trap or the door had been merely opened and closed.

Somebody moved near the window—the man who had entered the building in spite of protest. By the flickering, outside, torch-like glare, he could be distinctly seen against the background of the dark room. He lifted the under and lowered the upper sash; smoke in a thin stream curled beneath the lintel.

He leaned out and looked down, and spoke with the man on the ladder. He drew back and took up a bundle, which he quickly unwrapped, and out of which appeared the head of a lad. He slid the boy on the sill, seized his hands firmly, and lowered him to the full length of his arms. The man below had assumed a posture that was grotesque, and, still further below on the pavement, men had hurriedly drawn a life-net. The boy dropped without a murmur. He was caught by the athlete and passed to a colleague

who had crept up the ladder lightly and with great caution.

The crowd shouted. The man at the window stooped again, and, picking up a smaller object, stripped off the wet cloth from another little head and tawny face. The man extended himself across the sill, hung down with the child in one hand, and relaxed his grasp. The tiny bunch of flesh and fluttering linen fell pat into the upstretched hands. It was a second triumph within a space measured by seconds, and the people's cheers rent the air.

The athlete, relieved of his treasure, turned his eyes upward, and his face in profile, illumined by the reflections, looked like a piece of rugged, new bronze. A very brief time had elapsed, but he noted many changes. Those who stood in the street and on the pavement opposite could see more clearly. Fire had broken from several windows. The painted stucco on the house near the annex peeled and crumbled. Panes of glass were cracking and falling everywhere. Adder-tongues of scarlet flame licked up the cornice on the right. The wind had risen, and blew the dense smoke from the next house over the roof of The Fawn in a kind of broad, lurid streamer, a trail of colored cloud and black cinders and living sparks.

The man at the window, sitting astride the sill, ducked his head below the level of its narrow ledge. Smoke poured from above and beneath the sash. The inside of the room glowed as the inside of a furnace seen through dusky vapor—glowed sullenly with streaks of copper and purple lights and serpentine flashes.

While the man was easing his body over the sill of the window, the man on the ladder knotted his legs about the rungs, and got himself into his strange posture. Just then two figures came crawling forward on the roof—only the hands with a coil of rope and the heads in their helmets were visible over the eaves, between the somber clouds above them and the smoke beneath.

Help from that source, however, had come too late. The man now swung from the sill. He had a grip of steel; he ceased to oscillate.

The eyes of the crowd were riveted upon the one object, and a thousand hearts stood still. There were wheels clattering, engines puffing, the noise of wind and crackling flame and the dull crash of timbers falling, but no single, human voice was heard. The man dropped—he dropped straight into the arms of the man below.

But something snapped, as if a rung had broken. The ladder lurched. The tangled mass of the two men swayed and plunged. A wild shriek went up from the street like the cry of she-wolves. The mass hit the stretched net with a thud and a rebound.

In the next instant, Gretter, slipping under the rope and gaining the sidewalk, saw the huge human ball divide, and the two parts tumble over the edges of the net. Before he could

lend either a hand, both the little fellow and the big fellow were on their feet.

"He got in better than he got out," said the athlete, "the dancing buck! Why, he spit in my eyes like the llama at the show."

Gretter laughed, and turned.

"Did you hear what he said, Mr. Brown?"

"Oh, yes—yes; all of us have our jokes," he replied, drawing himself up and at the same time fumbling for something in his pocket. "He nearly broke my neck trying to save my life."

"Yes—I saw that; but are you hurt?"

Mr. Brown opened the small, flat, silver case that he held between his fingers, put his glasses on his nose, and then, speaking slowly as if quoting a remembered phrase from a book or a play, he said:

"One way or another, I have been a little knocked about—a little bruised, but, thank God, I am still alive!"



THE POET'S PRAYER

A POET prayed aloud for power to sing
 To all mankind one sweet, soul-thrilling song,
 To bring forgetfulness of daily wrong,
 And swift surcease of transient trials bring.
 O'er all the land his earnest prayer took wing,
 Soft echoing, here and there, amid the throng,
 From heart to heart, as gently borne along
 As breeze-blown fragrance from the flowers in Spring.
 And when the poet walked among his kind,
 Behold! they did great homage to his name;
 Gave thanks for endless good his words had wrought,
 And blessed the teachings of a master mind.
 Nor knew he whence came luster to his fame;
 For lo! his prayer had been the song he sought!

JAMES CLARENCE HARVEY.



"IT took us just seven days to go from Hoboken to Havre."
 "Well, it was worth it, wasn't it?"

A JESTER'S SONG

BECAUSE I passed my golden sheaves,
 And reaped the bitter herb thereafter,
 My cap I toss to gilded eaves
 And make the mirth for others' laughter.

Because my little hoard I pour
 Down at Love's feet, to speed Life's calling,
 I set a taper at Love's door,
 And sing of Joy each heart befalling.

Because of thirst in desert lands,
 Of hunger's gloom, no soul to harken,
 I shake Life's bough for waiting hands,
 And sing of stars that never darken.

The bondsman's chain shall sound this bell;
 The hidden scourge shall lend men laughter.
 Then, use me, Life, to dull Time's knell,
 Or ease Pain's night which stealeth after!

VIRGINIA WOODWARD CLOUD.



SURE TO GET IT THEN

DOCTOR—What you need is exercise. I should advise you to take long daily walks.

PATIENT—All right, doctor. I'll buy an automobile right away.



PROBABLY THERE NOW

BOBBY—Pa, did you ever see an arm of the sea?
 FATHER—Yes.

“Where was it?”

“It was hugging the shore the last I saw of it.”

PANDORA

By Duffield Osborne

JOHN ELLIOTT sat at his desk in his private office, his fingers drumming with annoyed insistence upon an open law-book, his eyes fixed moodily upon his irate partner. Burton Parker stood and swore gently, and thrust at him what seemed to be a type-written letter. Parker had burst into the room a moment earlier, but neither had spoken. The matter seemed to need no explanation; and so Elliott only drummed and glowered, and Parker glared and swore, and thrust the letter under his partner's nose.

"How much longer are we going to stand it?" rasped Parker.

"It's the limit," admitted Elliott.

"Well, I'm glad to hear you say so." There was a note of savage triumph in Parker's voice.

"I've said so for a year." And the counter note of defiance was equally in evidence.

They eyed each other like diplomats who recognize the possibility of strained national relations, each with his point in view, each recognizing the seriousness of the issue, and each holding himself in check, deploring the impending rupture and insistent, if it must come, that the other should speak the word.

At last, Parker began again, with his voice toned down to a strain of pathos and complaint.

"I suppose we're out at least five hundred dollars on this mess, not to mention the prospect of losing profitable clients for good and all."

"I don't doubt it in the least."

"And, coming within a week of the absurd blunder in the Electric Company's papers——"

"I swear I don't see how even she made that break."

"You don't, eh?" and Parker's tones again waxed irritant. "Well, I do. She compared the contracts with Sandford, and, after she'd copied the thing wrong, she read it to him right. It takes positive genius to make a mistake like that, but she has it."

"It isn't the kind of genius we need."

"No."

Again they eyed each other tentatively. Elliott struck in sharply:

"We'll notify her that her services won't be needed after the first of the month."

"That's nearly two weeks more," growled Parker. "The Lord only knows what she may do in that time!"

"We can hardly give her shorter notice," protested Elliott, mildly, "and if we've stood her for eighteen months, perhaps two weeks more won't hurt so much. We can send important papers out."

"Let it go at that, then," said Parker. "She's a nice girl in many ways, and I certainly don't want to be hard on her, only——"

"Yes," went on Elliott, reflectively, "and I tell you, Burton, it takes pluck for a girl who's been brought up a millionairess, to have her father die without a penny and to turn in to support a mother at stenography, as she has."

"And she's clever enough in all conscience, too. I confess I've never been able to realize her capacity for weird and original and fatal blunders."

"You never will, Burton, and neither will I, in this incarnation. It's some

feminine twist that no mere man ever has understood or ever can."

"And she's so infernally pretty and dainty and refined."

"Yes."

Once again they paused, and there was still in their attitude a savor of precarious truce rather than of settled peace.

"Then you'll notify her?" said Parker, at last, with an obvious "of course" intonation.

"Why don't you notify her yourself?" suggested Elliott. "You see, it's this break in your end of the business that proved the last straw."

"Why don't I notify her? Why, simply because you discovered and engaged her. You got us into the mess, and it's your business to get us out of it."

"On the contrary, my dear fellow, it strikes me that if there's to be a division of partnership labors, and I take all the trouble to get a stenographer and type-writer, the least you can do is give the two minutes necessary to discharge her if she proves unsatisfactory."

"Don't talk rot, Elliott. There's no reason at all why I should discharge your employee."

"She's not my employee, and you don't discharge her. The firm both employed and discharges; only, I acted for it in one case, and you act for it in the other. That's fair, except that my share involved about fifty times as much work as yours."

"You know her better than I do, and can say it more as a friend."

"My dear boy, that's just why I can't. My acquaintance with her father and Mrs. Boylston would make it a peculiarly awkward job for me. Besides, you can notify her so pleasantly, if you choose, that she'll feel as if she's having her salary raised."

"Huh! I think likely, when I'm taking the bread out of her mother's mouth. I won't do it, anyhow. You engaged her, and you've got to fire her."

"Really, Burton, I can't—knowing them socially as I do. Think of those big, stricken faun eyes!"

"I *am* thinking of them, damn it!"

The tension was all in evidence again. Then Elliott laughed out. "How often have we reached this point?" he asked.

"About twenty times, more or less," said Parker, smiling grimly. "Don't you think it's about time we cut the Gordian knot, unless two able-bodied, moderately successful men propose to have their prospects ruined by a bit of foolish sentiment?"

"Cut it, it is." Then, suddenly, a flash of inspiration illumined Elliott's face. "I'll match you to see who tells the girl we don't need her—services."

"'Don't need them' is good, John. Well, it's your business, but I'll be sportsman enough to give you a chance." And Parker extracted a coin from his pocket, and slapped it down on his knee.

Elliott did the same. "I match you?" he said.

Parker nodded, and raised his hand. "Heads," he announced.

Elliott examined his coin.

"Well?" queried Parker.

"It seems to be tails," admitted Elliott.

"So it's your job, my boy. After a while, you'll begin to realize that Fate knows her business. If you hadn't tried so hard to shirk your duty, I'd be sorry for you. As it is, I wish you joy."

The set of Parker's coat about the shoulders and back struck Elliott as triumphant to the point of bad taste; the door closed—not with a crude bang, but with a gentle decisiveness that was even more irritating. Elliott sat watching it with knitted brows. It would open soon to admit Miss Boylston. His was a clear, decisive head, the face less round, the jaw more sharply in evidence, than when he left the law school eleven years before, and the blond hair curled thicker on his lip and just a shade thinner about his temples. For this the work was responsible—the hard, grinding work that seemed but now to have reached the border-land of its appointed re-

ward. Sentiment had gone to the wall in that struggle with men and affairs, but kindness held fast with firm roots that no casuistry or opportunist's logic could quite tear loose. It was kindness that had forced him into this complication. He had known the Boylston fairly well, before old David Boylston's smash-up and death, and it had come to him distinctly as a shock, a year later, to learn that Ethel Boylston had learned stenography and was looking for a position. Then it was that, with Parker's consent, he had written her a decidedly "white" note. He had couched it in a vein of satisfaction over the news that she had reached that wisest of conclusions; that a woman, even as a man, was happier when she did something, if only on the score of added interest in life. He had intimated the little confidence that could be reposed in the average girl who regarded her work as the mere temporary means toward more varied amusements and more fashionable dress-makers and milliners, and he had ended by offering her a slight advance above the price a beginner could reasonably ask or expect.

As a matter of fact, Elliott viewed the influx of women upon business with those misgivings that are apt to beset the conservative coolness bred in minds well balanced and well trained against the microbe of social hysteria, but his most advanced doubt had never touched a suspicion of the result of this particular experiment. Socially, he had known Ethel Boylston as an unusually clever young woman; and now, after eighteen months of business relations, he had come to recognize in her a capacity for fatal blunders at crucial moments that was simply monumental. She was diligent, faithful, and, stranger than all, still clever, but her pencil and her keyboard were literally possessed of a devil who, for ingenious malice, bade defiance to competition, and who so designed his pranks that detection was well-nigh impossible until correction had become wholly so.

The seriousness of the firm's embarrassment on several occasions could not

be denied, however much Miss Boylston's remorse spurred Elliott and Parker into courteous disclaimers. Again and again she would have resigned could she have realized how the mistake crept in—sufficiently to shake her confidence against its recurrence; and, as a matter of fact, that particular mistake never did occur; only, the one that followed its footsteps usually cast it hopelessly in the shade.

So the eighteen months had passed; Miss Boylston, remorseful, and full of determination to recoup her blunders, Parker boiling with suppressed wrath, Elliott cursing the day he had gone counter to the time-honored maxim about mixing business and social relations, and each of the partners vying with the other in suave courtesy toward their employee and in the grim mutuality of their determination that she must go, and that the other must pronounce sentence.

Elliott started from his reverie, and touched his bell. "Ask Miss Boylston please to step in here," he said, to the answering office-boy. Then he leaned forward in his chair, and set his jaw as a man does to have a cut sewed up or a boil lanced. A moment, and Ethel Boylston entered, trim, alert, chic beyond all, her pretty lips pursed into an expression of business intentness, her note-book and pencil in readiness for dictation.

Elliott looked at her eyes. He had intended to look just a little above them and just a little below where the soft hair fell over her forehead. Therefore, he looked at her eyes and caught the mild interrogation in their brown depths, as she seated herself at his desk slide and poised her pencil.

He began to be conscious of a growing embarrassment that bade fair to develop into a distinct case of "rattles." If she only wouldn't look at him! If the point of that infernal pencil wouldn't shape an interrogation! He cleared his throat once or twice. Then he began:

"Miss Boylston, I've been considering for several weeks that possibly cer-

tain changes might not be altogether disagreeable to you. Heavens!" he thought, "that's clumsy enough, in all conscience;" and he felt the blood rush to his face.

The girl looked mildly surprised, and the air of business expectancy changed to one of more personal interest.

"You're very good, Mr. Elliott," she said.

Worse and worse! He had lost ground already, and he plunged recklessly to regain it.

"I mean in the direction of—of eliminating your work here," he said.

Miss Boylston's eyebrows went up with just the least involuntary motion. For the first time, she became conscious that her employer's manner lacked the businesslike poise so natural to him. He was very red, and, in mere sympathy, her own cheeks threw back a slight reflection. Suddenly, it occurred to her that he might be ill. She had always wondered at his gluttony for work, at the intensity of his application, and it had crossed her mind once or twice that this was the kind of thing that wore New York men out. She said nothing, but she began to watch him closely, and there was a suggestion of solicitude in her eyes which he saw, and, naturally, misconstrued.

"Do you care as much for business as you thought you would?" he began again, this time with a determined grip upon his sensibilities.

"I think I get more and more interested in it every day," she answered, quickly, somewhat reassured as to his condition, but wondering more than ever at the trend of his remarks. "Why?"

Elliott flushed again. "Oh, I've been wondering, of late, whether there might not be other things you'd prefer."

A new idea had come to him. It would be a thousand times better to find some excuse for paying her salary himself for a while; some fictitious employment where all the breaks within her capacity would make no difference

because the work itself wouldn't make any. Then he realized that he must be very ingenious to have it *appear* important. The least suspicion on her part—he knew just how quick she was—and "the last condition of that man would be worse than the first." Somehow, he found it hard to think quickly or clearly while she sat there, but he went on in the wild hope that general talk would give time for the happy inspiration to strike.

"After all, a home is a better place than an office for a woman, and there are many things to do there—things that are quite as important, and perhaps pleasanter."

A vague, impossible suspicion had begun to dawn upon Miss Boylston. His mere words meant nothing; but his manner!—that was altogether strange and embarrassed. It was quite a new phase of Elliott. She had always thought unutterable things of girls who imagined every man in love with them, or on the edge of it; but the fact that this clear-headed, incisive lawyer should suddenly fall to blushing and stammering like a school-boy, and that his short, impersonal speech should turn to rambling comment on her preference for other interests and the charms of home for woman, were certainly remarkable enough to justify some remarkable explanation.

She felt herself getting hot and cold, with just a little bit of indignation. If he was talking business, why should he not talk it out plainly to her, a business woman, as he had always done? If—but that "if" was absurd. He had always been very polite and considerate, even kind, and she appreciated both the act and the manner of his giving her a start in self-support. The idea of his calling his stenographer into his office with her book and pencil, to make serious love to her, struck her as quite too incongruous, absurd and indelicate. She laughed at the notion, while it revolted her; then she laughed again, and despised herself because the idea had even crossed her mind.

"Really, Mr. Elliott," she said—

and, despite herself, she knew there was a touch of hauteur in her voice—"I'm quite satisfied with my work here. I more than appreciate your kindness in giving me the chance, and, while I know I've made some perfectly incomprehensible blunders, I don't propose to make any more, and——"

Elliott held up his hand in unconscious protest. He began to realize how instinctively a woman says, "It's of no consequence at all," when you upset a glass of claret on a white dinner-gown.

"—and I should very much regret any change," she concluded.

"Even for the better?" he urged.

"Yes, even for the better," she blurted out, desperately; "that is, I don't see how I could have anything better."

Elliott looked at her keenly for the first time. There was no need, it struck him, for quite so much vehemence, and now he noted that she was flushed and embarrassed. "Gad!" he thought, "I never saw her look so pretty. Breaks or no breaks, I'm not going to throw her out of a job. Her salary won't ruin me, anyhow."

"I don't necessarily mean a change of employers," he said, gently.

She sat up, straight and stiff. Surely, if all this meant anything, he was presuming on his position, and carrying business similes to a point where they became positively insulting. If it meant nothing——

"Mr. Elliott, you must forgive me if I fail to catch your meaning."

The ring in her voice was unmistakable, and it struck him like a lash. For an instant he sat dazed, and then a sudden flood of meaning illumined his mind. Every word he had uttered like an embarrassed boy with only one idea in his head, passed in review before the cool, analytical lawyer, and the shock of the emergency was like a tonic to bring his powers under control. He looked at the girl as she sat, flushed and trembling, before him.

"Do you know, Miss Boylston," he

said, slowly, "if you'll pardon me for saying so, I'm under the impression that I'm an infernal fool."

She was at the point now where to laugh or cry balanced on the turn of a hair. Elliott had never thought so fast in all his life. He fully realized, as in a flash, how perfectly incomprehensible his speech must have sounded, except on the supposition that made him so many times a cad as to fill his inmost soul with the horror of it.

"I hope you believe me, Miss Boylston," he went on, "when I say that, ambiguous as my words must have sounded, they carried nothing whatever but their literal meaning. Least of all could I be guilty—toward you—of the bad taste of——"

She smiled now at his expression of frank humiliation. There was a youthful streak in Elliott, despite all his years and abilities; and his present likeness to a naughty school-boy who won't try to avoid the impending birching by any belittling of his fault, appealed to the softest side of her nature.

"Of course, I believe you," she said, quickly. "In fact, I'm very much ashamed of myself to have had, for a single instant, a thought that makes it necessary for me to say so. It was perfectly absurd——"

"It wasn't at all absurd, considering the way I put things. I don't see how you could avoid such a thought."

"Except that I should have realized that you were you."

"Well, you know, after all, you didn't really harbor the thought. You just had it for a second. That was bad enough, from my point of view, but it's all right now." And he held out his hand.

She thought again of the school-boy and the birch, but she took the hand.

"I think I respect you a little more than I ever did, Mr. Elliott," she said, slowly; "and, now that we're all straight again, will you please tell me what you were going to say?"

"No, I won't," said Elliott, laugh-

ing. "To tell the truth, I've quite thrown myself out of the vein of it."

"And I shall never know of the promotion you were hinting at?"

"That's because you were on the point of refusing the offer you thought I was going to make. Perhaps you don't realize how that hurts a man's pride——"

"But you *weren't* going to make it! You couldn't make it, under the circumstances. It isn't quite fair to punish me because you——"

"Made you think I was going to propose? It isn't *that*; it's because you were going to refuse me."

"That's not fair, either." The tears again seemed near the surface.

Elliott grew suddenly serious. He laid his hand again upon hers, and spoke very slowly.

"I'm going to ask you, Miss Boylston, to believe either better or worse things of me than you do. I'm going to say that I have come to know both you and myself a thousand times better in the last fifteen minutes. I have begged you to believe that I had no intention whatever of asking you to marry me when you came in here. Believe me now, when I say that some day I *am* going to ask you to marry me—don't answer. I'm not asking you now. Surely, there's never any harm in a man telling a woman that he loves her. Some day, when you've

begun to forget how clumsy I've been, I'm going to tell you that, clumsy or not, I've found myself. If you think it's going to be necessary for you to cease being my employee before I can ask you to be my wife, why, you can consider yourself discharged at once. If you don't see any connection between the two—as I don't—stay. I shall ask you only once, and if you don't care, you shall never know that I realize the difference."

Her head was down on the desk slide now, and she was sobbing softly.

"Don't—please don't," said Elliott. "I never realized before to-day how many kinds of a brute I am. I don't mean to be, God knows!"

She raised her head, quickly.

"You're not," she said; "you're the very best man I have ever known."

"I'm afraid 'best' doesn't go very far with girls."

"It *does*," she said, defiantly. "It goes a great deal farther than you foolish men ever dream. Besides, you've understood without asking questions, and you've been honest; and if you really want me, you'd better ask me now, while I think all these things."

She was laughing and crying at once.

"I said I wouldn't ask you now, and I won't. You're in no condition to decide anything. What I'm going to do, is just to take you without asking."



THE OBJECTIONABLE PART

QUEBY—Doesn't your wife object to your being seen so much with that little widow?

GAYBOY—No. It's the times we're not seen that she objects to.



THE prosperous realistic novelist is the wise man of his day and degeneration.

THE MUSE

By Elsa Barker

SHE is the idol of the wise,
The mistress of the rhyming race;
But pain lurks in her luring eyes,
And bitter-sweet is her embrace.

She lightly chains her chosen ones
With whispered secrets half-confessed;
But, when they summon her, she shuns,
And leaves them to the lonely quest.

The face of Love is not more fair
Than hers; all tender questionings
And dreams are hidden in her hair,
And memories of forgotten things.

The siren of the sea of souls,
She lures her lovers with the lyre
To leave their galleys for the goals
Where burns the sacrificial fire.

The world and all the wealth of it
They barter for her lightning kiss—
The rhythm of the infinite,
The vision of the vast abyss.

But they who drink the Muse's breath
Must buy their rapture with salt tears—
Their destiny until their death
To seek her down the mazy years.

Sometimes, into their lone retreat
Is blown her avid veil's perfume;
Sometimes her rainbow-sandaled feet
Go whispering by them in the gloom.

And strange and varied gifts she brings;
To some the amaranth of fame,
To some the gaunt wolf's yammerings,
To some the burning book of shame.

Along the lanes of many lands
Their solitary pathway lies;
And not a being understands
The wistful madness of their eyes.

Perhaps, when twilight veils the street,
 Some wanderer hears upon the air
 A sound so mystically sweet
 He sighs a half-forgotten prayer;

Perhaps, the whole world one day thrills
 To harmonies that vastly roll—
 'Tis only one of them who stills
 With song the yearning of his soul!



A HUMAN CROWD

AN egotist, a poet, a villain, an honest man, a hero, a coward, a gentleman and a boor once came together on the threshold of a new life.

The poet, his eyes in a fine frenzy, gazed in despair upon this incongruous company.

"My friends," he said, "Fate has thrown us together. Much as we may dislike one another, it is ordained that we shall be companions. Personally, I don't mind the company. I can point a moral and adorn a tale with the best or the worst of you. But I must say I sympathize with the others."

Thereupon the villain, with much gusto, began to assert himself.

"I am master here!" he exclaimed, and for a long time it seemed as if he had spoken truth. The honest man, however, who had been quietly biding his time, by-and-bye began to arouse himself.

Finally, the villain was obliged to compromise.

"I admit," he said, at last, "that I am not the whole thing. Henceforth you shall have your way, although I shall always be hanging around."

As for the coward, he began at once to make things unpleasant for the rest. His white feather could be seen continually in the front of the company, and he was constantly urging them to flee from all sorts of imaginary dangers. The hero, who was gathering strength slowly but surely, however, one day came to the front, and after that the coward, though he hung on, skulked in the rear.

"They can't shake me," he said, "but from now on I'm a back number."

The boor and the gentleman had a more even time of it. The honors were equally divided between them. Sometimes the boor was ahead, sometimes the gentleman. And as for the egotist, no one ever interfered very much with him. From a puny, delicate-looking youngster he grew strong, and without their really knowing it, practically dominated the whole crowd.

Thus they journeyed on together, until one day the fatal hour came for them to say good-bye.

"Gentlemen," said the poet, "we must now, by the decree of Fate, part company. But before doing so, shall we not drink a health to our Master, the one who has owned us so long, and who is about to go out into the unknown?"

With one accord they raised their glasses.

"By the way," said one, "what is the real name of the creature we dwelt in?"

"He is called," said the poet, "just an ordinary man, but I think he is a pretty good fellow."

THE TRUTH ABOUT JAPANESE GEISHAS

By Jason Trench

CONSIDERED in all her relations to the secular life of Japan, the geisha assumes an importance above the estimate that may be formed of her from the reports of the average tourist who does not probe beneath the surface of things. Japanese standards of respectability have differed from ours in the matter of concubinage, but, with the larger assimilation of Western ideals, this unhappy feature of their domestic life is being, and doubtless will be entirely, abolished. Probably the truth about them as a people lies somewhere between extreme flattery and extreme prejudice.

Of their loyalty to tradition, of the sincerity of their faith in the abiding influence of ancestry, there can be no question. Where is there in the world an instance to match the heroic devotion of those poor Buddhist women scattered through nine Japanese provinces, who, with naught else to give, sacrificed their hair to make coils of rope to be used in hoisting beams and swinging in place heavy stones for the erection of the Buddhist temple, Higashi Hongwanji, in Kyoto, not many years ago? The old women gave as freely of their scanty locks as did the blooming young damsels whose luxuriant black tresses were untouched by the frost of years. Before me, as I write, lies a strand of this hair, given me by a priest of the temple. It came from a piece originally two hundred and fifty feet in length, contributed by thirty-five hundred women in one province alone. Though Buddhism was disestablished nearly twenty-five years ago in Japan, this piece of

twisted human hair is a touching reminder of the fervor and tenacity with which those poor women clung to their faith.

While it is true that, before the Restoration, women in Japan were not allowed to be scholars, and that it was not deemed any essential part of their education to read and write, yet in the long-ago, as to-day, some of the most brilliant Japanese authors and poets were women. For the most part, however, the training of women in Japan, until within a comparatively recent period, has been in the direction of making them useful as wives. If no small number still are reared as were the courtezans of ancient Greece, it is because Japanese society still has a long distance to travel before it reaches the goal of a high civilization.

The position of the Japanese wife is not that of equality with her husband. He is the liege lord, to be obeyed by her in the most servile manner. He exacts from her the little attentions that an American woman expects, and usually gets, from her husband. Without so much as a murmur of complaint from his spouse, who must always receive him with bows and smiles and ever have her mind and eyes on his comfort, he goes and comes when he pleases. When he fares forth socially, he does not take her with him; when he receives gentlemen in his own house—a rare thing, by the way—madame seldom presents herself, unless in some menial capacity. And while such a thing as conjugal love must exist in Japan, it usually escapes the notice of the foreign sojourner, the people considering it vulgar to exhibit emotion

of any kind in public. The wife as a social unit being completely submerged, it follows that others of her sex must take her place socially, and in this office the geisha-girls play an important rôle.

No matter how gay or even wanton the husband may be, his wife must remain leal and devoted to him. If she does not, he divorces her without much ceremony and with no alimony, and keeps the children. Fear of this unhappy fate tends to hold Japanese wives faithful to their marriage vows, and, along with the other evils of this system, they silently tolerate all the husband's indiscretions.

As a further deterrent to their liberty and as a safeguard against their romantic possibilities, custom formerly made it obligatory for the Japanese married women of all classes to shave off their eyebrows, pull out their eyelashes, and varnish their teeth a jet-black. Well-bred wives of the higher class no longer do this, though the custom still prevails among the lower orders. The logic of the primitive man who started this practice must have been that the young bride would thus be rendered hideous in the eyes of other men, and hence safe from the advances of gay Lotharios. But how could the husband himself bear to see his wife so disfigured? Did he not very soon grow tired of gazing upon her mutilated features, and seek the society of some fair *musumé* who still retained all her pristine charms? For all we know, he wished his wife to look such a fright that she would be ashamed to be seen by his friends, for thus he would be freer to roam. However that may have been, the negligible relation of the wife to society in Japan accounts, in a large measure, for the geisha, though there are other reasons—to be considered later—that make the latter prevalent and, in a way, powerful.

The geisha is first what is called a *maiko*. As a child of six or seven years she is taken to a geisha-house—usually owned and managed by an old woman, who may herself once have

been a geisha. The latter makes an arrangement with the girl's parents, who, of course, are poor, by which for a consideration—not a very large sum in American money—the little Miss Chrysanthemum is bound over for a term of years to the old woman, who is expected to act as her guardian. For the privilege of conducting this business she also pays an annual tax to the government.

Immediately, the training for the career of the *maiko* is begun. Possibly no book knowledge is taught in the average geisha-house; if not, the girls go out for their lessons. But they are required to be up early in the morning and to study old Japanese poems and legends, which, later on, they are to depict in their dances. Then, for an hour or more, each is in the hands of a hair-dresser, and after breakfast, say, at eight o'clock, they sally forth to take their vocal or dancing lesson, the teacher being usually a superannuated geisha, who has married, and thus helps to eke out the livelihood of her family.

The *maiko* also learns to play the snare-drum, with what we should call very clumsy sticks, and to beat with the tips of their fingers or smack with open palm the parchment head of another instrument, shaped like a huge hour-glass, and called by the Japanese a *taiko*. Instruction in this art is given, as a rule, by some blind male musician. There are many of these blind men all over Japan, who ply the double calling of music and massage.

The *maiko* learn to sing and dance, but never play in public on the *samisen*, or *koto*, until they become full-fledged geishas. In the afternoon, they again study their historic ballads and poems, and sometimes go out among their friends to call until about half-past three, at which time they take their daily bath. In most cases they go to one of the many public baths to be found in every Japanese city. These establishments are divided into two compartments, one for men and boys, the other for

women and girls. In a large vestibule the *maiko*, not without much giggling and prattle, remove their clothes and patter into an adjoining room, where they find in readiness small hand-basins which they fill with hot water. They have brought with them their own wash-cloths and soap, and, with these, they proceed to scrub themselves. Then, having rinsed themselves, they take turns in getting into a large, wooden tub.

These tubs are of two kinds. In one, oval-shaped and the more commonly used, is fastened a sheet-iron or copper pipe, in which burning charcoal is placed to heat the water. The other, shaped somewhat like a cigar-box, and found in the better houses, has a fire-box underneath the iron or copper bottom, by which the water is heated. A wooden grating spread over the bottom of the tub, inside, prevents the bathers' feet from being burned. The water is actually boiling when these fearless little maids step into it, and the temperature would be quite enough to scald a tender-skinned Western girl. Shocking to relate, as many as three hundred persons may get into that tub daily, without a change of water! It is not that water in Japan is so scarce or precious, but that fuel is, and to waste fuel in heating water seems to the natives like criminal prodigality.

This kind of bathing was long an abomination to Western visitors, most of whom preferred to keep out of the promiscuous tub, but, fortunately, in these days the best Japanese hotels have met the needs of the fastidious tourist, and can provide him with an inviting tub and clean, running water. As yet, no improvement has been made in the public places, where a bath costs but one cent, or less. The people might end this hygienic absurdity of communal bathing by learning to use cold water, but they seem to have a dread and horror of it for that purpose, as do most people in the hot Eastern climates.

After stepping out of the tub, the *maiko*, now as red as very pretty

boiled lobsters, again give themselves a rinsing and then wipe their glowing flesh, not with a towel, but with their own wash-cloth wrung out. They don the thin cotton kimono in which they have come, even in Winter weather, and with nothing on their feet but *geta*—wooden clogs—they leave the place, carrying their bathing articles in a neatly tied-up bundle. Reaching home, the *maiko* have an early meal and make gorgeous toilettes, for they may be summoned to appear somewhere at a five-o'clock dinner. Their hair, dressed in the morning, needs but little attention now.

In the matter of finery the *maiko* have their share of vanity. They are fond of wearing gaily-colored costumes and bright hair-ornaments, either in the form of silken butterflies on wire frames, or flowers, also of silk, which quiver and sway on their wire stems when the girls are dancing. While waiting in their gala toggery, with rouged lips and powdered cheeks, to be sent for from some restaurant or tea-house or nobleman's residence, the *maiko* employ their time, perhaps, in rehearsing a dance or taking a lesson in etiquette from their older companions, for in these houses are always two or more geishas; or, perhaps, they work on a piece of embroidery.

They usually travel in pairs, as there are few, if any, solo *maiko* dancers. When they enter a room in which a dinner-party is gathered, they help the servants pour *saké*—a fermented liquor brewed from rice—for the guests, and sometimes are given a dish of sweetmeats or some dainty to nibble; but they never partake of the whole dinner, as the geishas are occasionally invited to do. The *maiko* are paid, in our money, from ten to fifteen cents an hour, their services being charged in the dinner bill. The *kuruma*—jinrikisha—fares, by the way, are added to the bill, and, sometimes, if the girls are kept late into the night, the price of food for them—not above ten or fifteen cents for each—is included. A *chadai*—gratuity—is al-

ways given them, but not openly handed out. It is placed in an envelope, in one corner of which is a printed symbol, not unlike the outspread wings of a moth, which indicates that it contains a gift. This tip, however, has to be surrendered to their employer, who counts upon it as a legitimate part of his or her revenue. The *maiko* are fed and lodged and clothed, but, as they gain experience, they are quite likely to get into debt to their managers. They receive no stated salary and few emoluments during this period when they are emerging from their juvenile chrysalis.

At a dinner in a tea-house or elsewhere, these miniature Eves will sit round the *hibachi* and demurely puff a cigarette, if one is offered, and they will pretend to drink the hot *saké*, but very little of this insidious beverage goes down their throats. Their presence adds piquancy and picturesqueness to these prandial scenes. For that matter, I might add that the young geisha-girls are the only persons seen on the street nowadays in bright colors, and in flowered and brocaded dress.

In front of each guest is a lacquer bowl, containing water in which to rinse the *saké* cup. If you observe the amenities of the occasion, you hand to the geisha nearest you the cup, which she holds, while you fill it with *saké* for her to quaff. She takes a tiny sip, pours out the rest, rinses the cup, and returns it for you to hold while she fills it, with perhaps some droll attempt to lisp a few words in English. The *saké* is in half-pint, porcelain bottles which are dipped in kettles of boiling water in the kitchen, so that the liquid will be hot when brought to the little square, lacquer tables. The menu varies, of course, according to what the giver of the dinner chooses to pay for it. For four guests you would want, if you adhered to conventions, four *maiko* and two geishas, for, say, three hours; and the repast, if elaborate and in a first-class resort, including tips and

everything, would cost about seven dollars. The dinner over, the guest of honor goes first in his *kuruma*, then the host, followed by the geishas, the servants bringing up the rear.

The *maiko's* term of service expires when she is sixteen, and several courses are then open to her. She may remain with her employer and be thereafter a geisha, or as such she may enter another house; or she may become a *mékaké*—concubine—or a common *joro*, or one of two other discriminated classes of courtezans; or she may marry and settle down to a dull, domestic routine in marked contrast to her previous giddy life.

And now as to the geisha. First, let us briefly consider her as a commercial factor. In order to understand the real influence of the geisha in Japan one must know something of how business is conducted there. Our old saying in this country, "Business first and pleasure afterward," is reversed in Japan. There it is pleasure first and business afterward; though back of that is the sordid principle partly expressed by another saying, "More flies are caught with honey than vinegar." For instance, if a wholesale dealer wishes to sell a large bill of goods, or a contractor wishes to secure a valuable contract, he invites to a smart dinner the prospective buyer or the man who may give the contract. He tries to engage the best-looking geishas, and also the geishas who, he thinks, are his friends and will work for his interests.

It is an undisputed fact that nearly every one of the more important Japanese merchants has in his employ, at a monthly salary, at least one geisha with whom he is on easy terms. The man who pays such a retaining fee has first choice of her services, but that does not mean that she can not go out and dance and sing and formally entertain others.

When a dinner is given with the ulterior purpose of doing business or of achieving a political *coup*, two attractive geishas, who well know what

is expected of them, are placed on either side of the honored guest, whom, with every fascinating wile known to them, they try to incline in favor of the amiable host. Truth to tell, if they can get the guest intoxicated they will surely do so. And it is a well-tested tradition that when a man gives his word in a business matter in a tea-house before witnesses, while under the influence of *saké* or other alcoholic drinks, he feels himself bound to keep it afterward—perhaps the better to forget the disgraceful condition he was in when he pledged his assent to the transaction. Indeed, he is far more likely to carry out promises thus made than when they are given in the sober seclusion of his office; for commercial integrity in Japan is almost unknown, and it seems a most pitiable paradox that a man must be made drunk in order to insure his honesty in business. Yet, at present, such seems to be the most available, if deplorable, expedient, since merchants and business men in general think nothing of canceling written agreements that become in any way irksome to them.

As the pagan society of Japan is organized, the geishas are simply indispensable, and they are not ignorant of their advantages. For one thing, they serve as social substitutes for those wives, sisters and daughters who are not allowed to be present at a dinner-party in a Japanese nobleman's home, much less in a tea-house. But, as a matter of fact, many of the more refined men lose their youthful enthusiasm over the feminine fascinations of the geisha, and tire of her falsetto voice and her dance which, as Mr. Finck truly remarks, is rather pantomimic than saltatorial. These same refined men, however, know that the geisha, quite apart from her more sensuous merits, has a peculiar value from her superb tact in entertaining a guest by talk and chaff designed to further the game that the host, her "protector," is trying to play. At such functions, where drab care is banished,

she does not dance the serious *No*, but the comic *Kidgen*.

Again, the geishas are naïve adepts in intrigue. They are also avaricious and ambitious. And, being brighter and more accomplished than the average run of Japanese women, they manage to hold their own in repartee with any masculine wag. In the pursuit of their numerous duties they often overhear business and political secrets, and these they are not above selling to the highest bidder, though it might be added that they are generally true to their friends. When a pair of geishas leave the house wherein they are inmates, on a professional errand, a servant is sent with them to take care of their outer wraps, and, more especially, to watch their conduct; for no small portion of the money paid them—the monthly allowance—goes to their employer, and it is the latter's policy to see that each geisha remains faithful to her benefactor.

The geishas are not only engaged to entertain at tea-houses and private dinners given by noblemen, but they are often invited as companions to enliven box-parties in the theatres. In that way, again, they act as social substitutes. Food, wine and cigarettes are served in these boxes. However loose may be their talk, the geishas are always modest in their actions. They always keep a certain amount of dignity. After reading the books of some imaginative globe-trotters, one would think that the geishas indulge in the most unheard-of orgies. It is needless to assure the reader that such stories are grossly false. If these travelers saw such revolting sights among the homeless haridans and wastrels in the seaport towns, they should have been more accurate in designating them, for these wretched mortals were not geishas. While the guests at a dinner are passing wine and becoming hilarious, the geishas will not follow their example, though one-eighth of what the men drink would cause Kinno and Compachi and their kind to fall to the floor in a swoon.

The geishas often receive large tips and costly presents. The most popular and prosperous ones wear rare gems, watches, beautiful silk kimonos with obis, in themselves costing enormous sums. Their temptations are strong and many, and that no small number are to be ranked among fallen women is scarcely a subject for wonder. Most of the leading men of Japan have supplementary wives, and of these many are geishas. The Emperor, under the old Chinese code of morals, is allowed twelve concubines, and that he has more is not to be doubted. His son, Prince Haru, the heir to the throne, cannot call the Empress his mother, and provision has been made in the new code of Japan that, barring Prince Haru, no son who is the issue of the Emperor and a concubine shall be eligible hereafter to the throne.

With such things to confront him, the Christian missionary, it will be seen, has up-hill work in Japan. And it is my honest opinion that the regeneration of the people can come only through the women of Japan, through education, and the high moral influence of such gentlewomen as Madame Hatoyama, who has organized many clubs for the purpose of helping her sex to come to a consciousness of its rights and needs and destiny. And these geisha-girls are a force to be reckoned with in any scheme of national purification. Politically, the geisha is a connecting link, a sort of Madame de Pompadour, between the commonalty and the ruling powers.

The only time that a Japanese gentleman entertains at his own home on a large scale is when he gives a garden-party. The back of a Japanese house faces the street, while the front looks upon the garden. The one entrance from the street to the poorer houses is through the kitchen. In those of the better sort there is another door leading into an anteroom. But between the houses runs an alley which conducts one to the garden. Reaching the rear door of the house to which you have been invited, you re-

move your shoes, which your *kuruma*-puller takes in charge, and your overcoat, which it would be impolite to bring into the dwelling. When a Japanese puts on his top-coat he always says, "Excuse me." Should you be in the street, even on a cold Winter's day, when the Emperor came along, you would, if you were a native, take off your coat and hat till he was well past.

Entering the anteroom, you meet the grandfather or some old retainer, who offers you a cup of choice tea. One cup answers for all the guests, some of whom seat themselves informally on little cushions. You are at liberty to walk about the house, but as there is nothing except bare rooms to see, all the family treasures, plate and heirlooms being locked up in heavy oak chests or stored elsewhere, you naturally step out into the garden, where, just without the threshold, you find a pair of Japanese straw sandals to put on. However small the space, here are miniature mountains, valleys, lakes, rivers crossed by stone bridges, huge stone lanterns, dwarf trees trained in many fantastic shapes. All these things, and more, you will find in every well-to-do man's garden, and even the poor have little plots in which Dame Nature is imitated or caricatured.

This particular garden that we have just entered is spacious and ingeniously bedight with little marvels. Here the tall, sallow-faced host meets you with many low bows and polite words of welcome, referring in reckless, and far from accurate, derogation to his demesne, as though to make you feel how generous is your condescension in accepting his invitation. "*Ishiku mairi-tari*," that is, "You have done well in coming—it is good that you have come." This he repeats several times. You are doing great honor indeed to his poor house; he has nothing, but it is all yours; he does not deserve such honorable kindness from you, but you are welcome, nevertheless. He will introduce you to his son or sons, even if they be only four or five years old, but his wife and daughters are con-

spicuous by their absence, as are the wives and daughters of his guests.

But no social gathering of any pretensions is complete without the fair sex, and so geishas have been summoned to do the honors which would devolve upon the ladies of the household, were they allowed to be present. The first place to which you are taken is a small, thatched tea-house, divided into two rooms. In one of these the servants boil the water in a large iron kettle suspended from the roof over a charcoal fire; in the other sit guests partaking of the ceremonial tea, ministered to by a handsome geisha.

Like all gardens in Japan, like Japan itself, this enclosure lacks grass and lawn; and if you should ask why these stones and boulders are placed in such and such a way, perhaps only a Shinto priest could tell you, for their arrangement has a religious significance not known to laymen. The bright kimonos of the geisha-girls, fifty or more of them, and the various striped pavilions and booths remind one of a bazaar in Cairo. In two of these are tables piled high with bamboo boxes containing food. You may eat of these comestibles, or take them home with you to those who have a better appetite for them, keeping the pretty box as a souvenir. In it are boiled rice, colored blood-red, sharp pickles, chopped duck-meat, raw, cooked and smoked fish—all neatly packed in crisp lettuce-leaves, and on the top *hashi*—chop-sticks.

In another booth, a glass of beer or *saké* or claret is handed you by a vivacious geisha who acts as barmaid. In still another tent, wisely pitched some distance from the rest, cuttlefish is fried in sesamum oil for you while you wait and—hold your nose if you dare! One writer on Japan says that if the man in the "Arabian Nights" who said "Open sesame!" to the rock-built door was cooking cuttlefish at the time, the odor was probably enough of itself to open any number of rock-built doors.

At first, every one is dignified and on his best behavior, but, after the *saké*

has been passed a few times, the faces begin to flush and the guests show symptoms of an orgiastic gaiety. Everywhere geishas are bustling to and fro, laughing and trying to please. Old men run races with the *maiko*; all sorts of sports are improvised. Of all people in the world the Japanese love best to play games, and, if you can teach them a new one, or a clever trick of any kind, they are as delighted as children.

This garden fête lasts from three to six. As the guests are about to leave, some one proposes singing the national anthem—the shortest one in the world, I believe—which is promptly rendered with much spirit:

*Kimi ga yo wa
Chiyo ni yachiyo ni
Sazare ishi no
Iwara to narite
Koke no musu made.*

The English translation is something in this wise:

May our Lord's dominion last
Till a thousand years are past,
Twice four thousand times o'ertold,
Firm as changeless rock, earth-rooted,
Moss of ages uncomputed.

Whatever she may feel, a Japanese woman never shows any perceptible feeling of pain, sorrow or love. The present writer has seen a woman in a dentist's chair in Kyoto, who was suffering excruciating torture, yet her face was as stolid as possible. The women will cry and they will laugh, but otherwise, when you attempt to interpret their inner feelings by what you see in their faces, your task is quite hopeless. Even the geisha-girls, with all their finesse, seem unable to convey an idea to others by facial expression. Their dances are symbolic, but their faces show nothing of what is in their hearts and minds.

Each year the geishas take part in the *matsuri*, or *al fresco* festivals, usually in honor of some god, and each of them every month puts aside a small sum of money—they spend money very freely—to buy costumes for these occasions.

Like all Japanese women, except those in the highest class, geishas are

superstitious. They never do anything of moment without consulting the ubiquitous fortune-teller. Their great wish is to be white-skinned—hence their profuse use of rice powder—and to have a long nose, which they think is aristocratic. Where many a Japanese woman's face fails is in that feature, which is so often stubby and flat. With all their faults and weaknesses, they sometimes have the luck to meet good men who fall in love with

them and marry them. In such cases, they make notably excellent wives and good mothers.

If, like her own sacred lotus-flowers, Japan grows out of the stagnant pools and muck of her present into a supreme civilization, she must abandon many harmful traditions and adopt the Christian ideals of the Western world. In this grand transformation she will be aided more and more by her warm friends, the Americans.



A SUMMARY

TO some her eyes, with changeful shadows filled,
Recall two pools a pastured brook has spilled
Upon its edge, reflecting the clear hue
Of virgin morning, midday's burning blue,
At eve the far, high skies by night winds chilled.

And when, around her glances, lover's build
Presumptuous fancies, by their light distilled,
Alluring spirits, those clear waters through,
To some arise.

To some, indeed; but, in my heart instilled,
Reigns faith in her, whose mercy has fulfilled
Night's aching dreams; for she has bent her true,
Unsullied fancy in allegiance to
The one who seeks her charm in verse unskilled,
To summarize.

BEATRICE D. SANDERSON.



MADE ANOTHER MAN OF HIM

HE—My first wife married me because I neither smoked, drank, nor played cards.

SHE—How did your second wife come to marry you?
"To reform me."



IT is doubtful if we are ever as sorry that we didn't take advice as we are that we did.

DEAR HEART AND I

By H. T. George

THE name is of her own choosing. It is not what I, a hard-headed man of business, with a sensitive aversion to sentiment, would have chosen permanently to call my wife. That is why, when once I let the little phrase slip, quite inadvertently, she clapped her hands perversely, and insisted it should be my name for her forever. And because, since I have known my Dear Heart I am not quite so opinionated as to wives and sentiment, I—

But, there, of course, I did. I yielded.

It was my study, but my Dear Heart was there. She often is, at night, when I write or read beside the wonderfully bedizened desk she gave me on my birthday. And, glancing up at every period, I find her solemn-glazed gray eyes fixed upon me so compellingly that I reach across to kiss their heavy lids, and so the sequence of my thought is lost. But I cannot make my Dear Heart understand the damage she has done.

"I was just as quiet!" she protests, truthfully. "Only, the thread broke, and I stopped to look at you. A cat may look at a king, I hope!"

My Dear Heart is very indignant, and I think she has just cause. For it is a solemn compact between us that each time I come to a period I may look at her, and every time her thread breaks she may look at me. You would suppose I would have much the better of her there, but I don't. It is truly astounding, my Dear Heart says, the extreme fineness of the thread one

has to use in making lace or gathering foolish little ruffles.

But to-night I was very busy indeed.

Time was when I used to go back to my office after dinner, and there, with my coat off and my pipe lighted, do a tremendous amount of work before the clock struck twelve. But my Dear Heart has changed all that. She says I can work just as well at home—and we both tingle with delight of that glorified little phrase—and, besides, she is quite sure I am kinder to my would-be contributors when she is by to restrain my natural editorial love of gore.

I don't at all know where my Dear Heart acquired her knowledge of editors, but she has a firmly fixed idea that I am responsible for a fearful portion of the heart-aches of the world. For the work I bring home oftenest, of late, is a few of the manuscripts that have waited longest, and my Dear Heart and I go over them together; that is, she watches my face as I read, and when I have tossed one aside, with the expression that says, "Rubbish!" Dear Heart sometimes insists upon reading it through herself—and never fails to find it full of merit. And when I have put upon one the magic mark that means accepted, who rejoices as does my own Dear Heart, in what she invariably esteems my discovery of a genius?—especially if the genius be a woman.

I am a little afraid I shall have to stop this charming irregularity of working at home. There has been, my kindest critics tell me, a falling off in

the grade of articles in the periodical upon which my name stands as in some part responsible. I can easily believe the critics, and I can understand that they would in no wise forgive me should I take the trouble to tell them of my picturesque home study, and of my new comprehension of what happiness means—and so, by contrast, pain—and of my Dear Heart with her solemn-glad eyes.

Hereafter, I shall do my work in my office; but oh, the evenings are very long, and life is pitifully short!

To-night I was very busy. Very firmly I let the periods pass without looking once at my Dear Heart, though I knew, with that sixth sense which is as yet quite new to me, but which Death himself will not take from me, that her thread was extravagantly fine. There were only two manuscripts, and the first was very good. I smiled with pleasure in its goodness, and then I knew my Dear Heart, too, smiled delightedly.

But when I unfolded the next one, I frowned, before I laughed a little, and then my Dear Heart fell upon me.

"You are not beginning it in the proper spirit," she declared. "You must not be prejudiced before you read. And what's the matter with the beginning of it?"

"The author's name," I said, defensively. "I haven't read any farther than that."

"You see!" cried my Dear Heart, triumphantly. I don't know just what she had proved, but she knew. "And what is the author's name, most fastidious sir?" My Dear Heart can be very sarcastic, indeed!

"The lady's name is Clarissa C. St. Clair," I responded, sibilantly, and, in my turn, triumphantly.

"Oh!" said my Dear Heart, untangling a knot in her thread. It was plain she had grown tired of looking at me. "You object to the name?"

"Not wholly, Dear Heart. I have taken stories written by Violet Pearls, and I have rejected articles by Mary Jones. But, as it happens, Clarissa C.

St. Clair has offered us the products of her pen before."

"And aren't her stories good at all?" asked my Dear Heart, almost tremulously, in the fineness of her sympathy.

"They are not good at all," I responded, mildly. "They are, Dear Heart, absolutely inane, illiterate, unprintable nonsense!"

"Oh!" cried my Dear Heart again, protestingly.

"But it is true, my love," I maintained, firmly. "She cannot spell, Clarissa C. St. Clair. She is ignorant of the first principles of English, Clarissa C. St. Clair. She——"

"Don't!" commanded my Dear Heart, indignantly. "You needn't read her story, need you? And you needn't trample upon it—and her. Perhaps you are quite right—perhaps she is an ignorant, foolish little thing, but it has pleased her to try, and it hasn't hurt you, has it? It won't hurt you now, will it? Hasn't she done what you want? There's the stamp and her name on the first page, and it's very neatly type-written, and folded only once. I'm sure she tried." My Dear Heart's voice shook, pityingly, and I felt that I had been a brute.

"It's a very neat manuscript," I admitted. "It's an improvement on her old ones. Some one must have told her, or she has been reading hints to young authors. It's all of two years since we heard from her, you see, but we used to have a story or a poem once a month. I didn't mean to be unkind, Dear Heart"—for her cheeks were indignantly crimson yet—"but, indeed, it is such a pathetic waste of time for a child like that—I am sure she is only a child—to try to write. Why doesn't she fall in love, instead?"

"Perhaps," said my Dear Heart, softly, "she has grown up since you heard from her. Perhaps she has—loved," whispered my Dear Heart—so dearly that I leaned and kissed her, and her eyes were wet.

Perhaps you think my Dear Heart is a very foolish little person. Well,

you do not know her. If you did, you would love her tears—and they are very ready—even better than her dimples, which show only when she smiles.

I laughed when I had kissed her, and lighted my cigar—it is really my room, you see, and my Dear Heart is the visitor—and took up the manuscript again.

"For your sake it shall be most carefully read," I declared. "Let us hope the fair Clarissa has grown old and loved in two years."

My Dear Heart put her cheek against mine, coaxingly. "Just to see if she hasn't improved in two years," she crooned. "Now, perhaps you'll be surprised. One can improve in two years."

"You, for instance!" I teased, blowing smoke-rings in her hair. "But, then, two years ago you came within the sphere of my influence."

And at that, "Do you remember?" cried my Dear Heart; and, "Have you forgotten?" demanded I. And my Dear Heart had to run away and leave me, else we should have done nothing all the evening but ask each other, in the deepest excitement, "Do you remember?" and, "Have you forgotten?"

Perhaps it is just a bit foolish, but unless you know all about it you cannot judge, and if you know all about it you are not competent.

At the door, my Dear Heart turned to look back at me with her eyes more solemn than glad. "Be good to poor Clarissa C.!" she said.

And then, from miles away, in the next room, I heard the piano begin to whisper softly.

Would I not then be good to poor Clarissa C.? Would I not henceforth be good to all the world of women, pretty and plain, witty and fools, because my Dear Heart was a woman? because—?

My eyes found the reason in the first sentence on the rustling page:

"Love walked in the garden of the world, and Life crept to his feet."

I smiled tenderly at the quaintly apt wording of my thought. But, as I

read on, I did not smile again. I wondered. Was it love that had come to Clarissa C., or was it sorrow? Or could it have been wisdom? Was it Clarissa C. who had written so—telling how Life crept to the feet of Love and was lifted against his breast, and knew the wonder of his breath against her cheek, of his whisper in her ear—the marvel and the fear and the delight of him?

Clarissa had grown very old, and loved. That was sure. I read on, but my heart cried out against her. That she should tell the secret so, for men to read who had not loved!—the solemn, awful secret of life grown one with love; her secret, mine, and my Dear Heart's! And yet—how could she not tell it?

Out of the silence came the piano notes, slow, soft, wondering.

"And Love whispered to Life, 'I am come!'"

Ah, my Dear Heart, Dear Heart! That night, when you came down the stairs to greet me, and my eyes told you what my lips dared not frame, and your eyes understood what, at night and in the dark and quite alone, you had not dared to hope!

But who had put that hour into words—until now, when I read it blindly in the full glory and holy shame of it? Who had dared—until now? And yet one understood how her heart must have ached forever with the burden of it, if she had been forbidden to bring it forth in words. Are all women so? Oh, my Dear Heart, is this pain yours—this triumph?

"And Life laughed aloud on the breast of Love."

Even so when—but, dear Heart, it was only for short moments at a time that you hurt me a little because your laughter was so empty of all save joy. Afterward, in the dusk of that twilight, do you remember? It was only that a runaway horse plunged by in the street I was soon to cross. But—

"Life clung to Love, although he had not stirred, and all the rose-sweet garden grew empty with a great fear of his going."

If you had put that fear in words, the night your lips grew white with it—the night I understood and held you closer, but could not speak of it—we might have laughed at it together. The woman here had written it boldly, that she might defy it, laughing.

But nevermore with pure joy; only quietly and fearlessly, for—

"Love clasped Life's hand closely, and the roses leaned to hear their vows, and Life smiled gravely, for she knew that only one voice in the garden, among the roses, could bid their hands unclasp."

Dear Heart, Dear Heart, are all women so? When I kiss your eyes and they are glad with my kisses, are they yet solemn while you listen for the voice?

Untroubled and clear, the piano notes swelled into sound.

"Even so Life smiled, for though the Voice called and their hands unclasped, obeying, and one of them followed it into the darkness—they would have walked together in the garden."

If the Voice called? If the Voice should call! Could the women who wrote follow—or you, Dear Heart? Or I, who love you so, whom you so love?

My cigar had gone out, and the smoke that had floated between my eyes and the page had vanished, yet I could not see the words. I could only hear the music stealing timidly through the closed door, whispering, stammering, breaking into little murmurs of confession.

Then, suddenly the mist cleared, and I saw the words plainly at the foot of the page:

"And so Life and Love walked in the garden of the world, and Life grew wise with the wisdom of all worlds and of every age. But Love is never wise. So Life whispered to him very softly, and he understood, and they were greatly glad. And she said, 'We will call its name Happiness!' and he said, 'We will call its name Happiness!'"

And even as I lifted my eyes from the page, the music stopped, and I saw

my Dear Heart waiting in the doorway. And even as I saw my Dear Heart waiting in the doorway, I saw the name—only two little words—at the foot of the page.

And then my Dear Heart hid her face in its own nest, just under my chin, and cried; but not sorrowfully.

"And you," I said, stupidly, for it was not at all the most important thing, "were Clarissa C.?"

"And I," sobbed my Dear Heart, "was Clarissa C. But don't you think I am a little wiser Clarissa C.? After I knew you, I was so ashamed! I burned all over when I thought that some day you might know. But I was so very young, dear—I am so very young yet, you see. And then—this came to me one night, all in a little dream song, while you were sleeping. And I knew it was good because it ached so to be written. And so I wrote—and now you know!"

I kissed my Dear Heart tenderly, and then, "Shall we print it?" I asked her.

But she looked at me with such horror-filled eyes that I hastened to reassure her.

"Nay, we will do this, Dear Heart," I said. And she stood a little apart, and watched me while I opened a tiny drawer in my desk—such a tiny drawer that we had often speculated jeeringly upon its idea of usefulness—and laid the folded manuscript within it. Then I closed the drawer and locked it with its absurdly ornamental key, and hung the key on my watch-chain; and my Dear Heart applauded happily.

And then, even then, the instinct of my craft overcame me.

"But you will write for me again?" I asked her, humbly. "You will let the world know why I am proud of you?"

My Dear Heart shook her head, smiling.

"You would not be proud," she said, not at all regretfully, "for I have not learned to write. I have not even learned to spell. I have only learned what life means to us two. And that is not a story for the world."

SYLVIA'S DIMPLE

SYLVIA'S gown was bewitching,
And fashioned of ribbon and lace,
A marvel of puffing and stitching,
Of criss-cross and curly-cue grace.
So perfectly planned was this toilette,
She rivaled a sylph in her shape;
And yet, I had power to foil it—
'Twas her dimple I could not escape!

Sylvia's tresses were tinted
With amber in shine and in shade,
The sunlight—how tenderly glinted
Its rays on the locks of the maid!
Sooth, it was rapture to eye them
Imprisoned in ringlet or twist;
Yet, truly, I might have passed by them—
'Twas her dimple I could not resist!

Her cheeks had the color of peaches
That lightly the Summer hath kissed,
Or the hue of a rose that beseeches
The moon, half-hid by a mist.
'Twas peerless—the line of their curving
By sun-heated breezes untanned;
I might have beheld them, unswerving—
'Twas her dimple I could not withstand!

Ah, what shall I sing of her lashes,
The shy, haunting luster beneath,
As bright as the wild spray that dashes—
As soft as the dew on a wreath!
Her delightfully perilous glances
Extorted my rapturous sigh;
To flee them, perhaps, there were chances—
But her dimple, ah, who could defy!

Her beauty was ever before me,
Like an innocent star in the night;
Her dimple 'twere well to deplore me,
Like a sharp-shooter hidden from sight.
All armor were useless, but elfin,
For none can be fashioned by art;
And, lacking the sort to put self in,
A flash!—I was shot through the heart!

SAMUEL MINTURN PECK.

THE RECKONING

LOVE taught me all I knew of bliss;
 Love taught me all I knew of pain—
 Lured me with laughter and disdain,
 Then made me captive with his kiss.

He vowed no pleasure I should miss,
 Then swift he wounded me again—
 Love taught me all I knew of bliss;
 Love taught me all I knew of pain.

So deep we sounded grief's abyss,
 My heart to beg release was fain;
 Ah, would my pleading had been vain,
 For now I but remember this:
 Love taught me all I knew of bliss!

CHARLOTTE BECKER.



THE ALTERNATIVE

NODD—Why are you going to spend Christmas with your relatives, if you don't want to?

TODD—No other way out of it. If we don't, they'll spend it with us.



HIS FIRST EXPERIENCE

SIMMONS—Were you ever homesick?

KIMMONS—Yes, once. It was soon after I married and went to housekeeping. I had never before known what a home was.



MAN always looks for a hidden sting in woman's generosity to other women.

THE NEW HOUSE

SOME LETTERS FROM MR. ROBERT FERGUSON, A PATIENT MAN, TO HIS WIFE

By Clement Fielding

MAY 10.

DEAR JULIA,
Of course, I understand just how disappointed you are at not being able to stay here this Summer to help me superintend the building of our new house, but I'm glad you agree with me that it's much better for you to remain at your father's and get well and strong again, and then come back in the Autumn when the house where we hope to spend so many happy years is ready for us. You have seen all the plans and approved of them, and you may be sure that they will be carried out to the letter, so it really will make no difference. It is very fortunate that I shall be able this Summer to put in practically all of my time right here on the ground. I shall make sure that things are done properly, and, above all, I shall see that there is no delay. I have a gang of excavators engaged to begin work on the cellar to-morrow morning. I must stop and go to bed, as I shall have to be up early.

ROBERT.

II

MAY 12.

DEAR JULIA,

Work on the cellar has not moved along quite so fast as I hoped; still, we are getting on. I went up early, and, instead of finding a gang of men, found only one man, a large fellow, wearing a heavy gold watch-chain. It appeared that he was the walking delegate of the Cellar Diggers' Union, and

had heard that I was going to have the earth drawn away by non-union men, and he said he couldn't let his men work. I didn't know anything about what the teamsters were, and it took all day to find out. However, it was finally established that they belonged to the Team Drivers' Union, so it was arranged that the diggers should begin yesterday morning. They didn't do so, however, because the walking delegate of the Hat Workers' Union heard that I was wearing a non-union hat, and he came up to see about it. I let him explore the hat, and he found a lot of hieroglyphics under the band which I had never seen, and said it was all right and the men could begin at noon. They did so, and work went on famously until three o'clock, when they came upon a stone about as big as a wash-tub, and all stopped. I asked what was the matter, and they said that if they rolled out the stone the Rock Hoisters' Union would protest, and they would lose their standing in the Combined Amalgamation of Excavators, so I shall have to engage a gang of rock hoisters to pry it out, after which I'm sure matters will move on again. I am determined to push the work with all speed.

ROBERT.

III

MAY 13.

DEAR JULIA,

We accomplished less to-day than I hoped, owing to the fact that the men

came to a tree root, and I had to telephone to the walking delegate to send up a member of the Tree Rooters' Union to remove it. The diggers and hoisters rested while this was going on, being afraid that he might be a non-union man, but after he proved to be all right they began again. Work went on swimmingly for a couple of hours, when a walking delegate for the Footwear Workers' Union came up and stopped everything on the ground that I was wearing non-union shoes. He said that if I would take 'em off he would see. I didn't like this very well, but I'm so anxious to get on with the house that I complied. He found them union made, and work began once more. The cellar goes on so slowly that I've decided to have the carpenters I've engaged begin work to-morrow on the barn. I think I'd better have some cement walks laid, too, as the walking delegates are tramping down all the grass.

ROBERT.

IV

MAY 17.

DEAR JULIA,

I have been too busy to write as often as I wished. Have had bad luck with the barn. When the carpenters came and found what I wanted them to work on, they were quite indignant—said I would have to get men belonging to the Barnsmiths' Union to do the work. I did so, and a start was made, when a walking delegate from somewhere came along and ordered the men to "knock off" because the lumber I had got was made from trees cut with axes fitted with non-union handles. It didn't make much difference, however, as the next day the Conglomerated Aggregation of American Building Constructors ordered a general strike, and everything has stopped. Thought it would be a good time to dig the well, and have men from the Well Diggers' Union at it, assisted by representatives from the Well Rock Hoisters' Union and the Well and Cistern Tree Rooters' Federation. I forgot to say

that the cellar is done. And just this moment I heard that the chicken-coop and hen-housesmiths are not included in the general strike, so I can push work on our poultry building.

ROBERT.

V

JUNE 10.

DEAR JULIA,

Matters have been progressing rather so-so. The Well and Cistern Tree Rooters' Helpers struck, and as the men wouldn't root with non-union helpers, the work stopped for several days. But the well is done at last, and by great good luck, between strikes, I got the cellar wall finished. The cellar had caved in on one side, but I got men from the Caved-in Cellar Repairers' Union, and this was soon remedied. The poultry house lags, however, since the smiths could put it up only in a general way, as it were, both the hen-house shinglers and the chicken-coop door hangers being out in the general strike. But I wish you could see the cellar—all completed, and really a very snug, cozy and homelike cellar it is, too.

ROBERT.

VI

JUNE 20.

DEAR JULIA,

Matters stand much as they did. It's a beautiful cellar, and the hen-house is all right, so far as it goes. There are a good many walking delegates about, and yesterday one of them fell into the well. I pulled him out. Now I hear he's in trouble with his organization because he let a non-union man rescue him. It's his own affair, and I sha'n't worry. I understand that the Rafter Raisers and Roofers' Union has settled its grievance and been released from the strike. If I can hit on some plan to hold our roof up I think I'll have it made. It would be so much done. I have it now! I'll get men from the Flag Pole Setters' Union to put up a pole at each corner of the cellar, and

then have the roof put on these.
After all, we are getting on, you see.

ROBERT.

VII

JULY 2.

DEAR JULIA,

If you could only see our house now! I have carried out the plan I mentioned, and have a splendid roof on the poles over the cellar. It looks a good deal like a mud-turtle on stilts, but it's there, and it's finished, and now all I've got to do is to fill in between the roof and the cellar, and there we'll be. I'm sure we're going to be very comfortable in our house. It's a good roof, and doesn't leak a drop. The cellar, too, doesn't leak a drop—all the rain has to be pumped out. Shall I have the dining-room ceiling a light buff, or would you prefer a pale blue? It is announced positively that the whole strike will be declared off September first. Nothing can

be done before that, but then you'll see things hum. I'll have that roof and cellar connected with the house almost before you know it. Don't forget to tell me about the ceiling.

ROBERT.

VIII

SEPTEMBER 2.

DEAR JULIA,

It's all over. Please come home as soon as you can. Have taken our old flat for another year. The strike was settled yesterday, as promised, but it seems that the walking delegates have discovered that there was a boycott on the agent who sold me the land, on account of his riding in a street-car last Winter when there was a strike of the conductors, so the union will have nothing more to do with the house. Have sold the roof for kindling-wood and given the cellar to the fresh-air fund.

ROBERT.



THE AMOUNT REQUISITE

CHOLLY—How much money would a man have to have to marry you?

SHE—Is it yourself you have in mind?

"Ye-es, I suppose so."

"All there is."



THE SEVEN STAGES OF LOVE

THE incipient stage.

The silly stage.

The unconscious stage.

The unreasoning stage.

The reckless, or marrying, stage.

The sobering-up stage.

The sensible stage.

THE MINISTRATIONS OF FRIENDSHIP

MARY ISABEL was a young woman who had been fortunate enough to meet Opportunity lingering on her door-step; clever enough to recognize him; diplomatic enough to flatter him; and charming enough to attach him.

He, in return, made her a little present of social success. It was a delightful gift, and very like the kingdom of heaven, in that its possessor found that all things else were added unto her.

When Mary Isabel had been enjoying her endowment for about a month, and had grown accustomed to referring to "my host of engagements," and "this absurd demand I am in," she developed a well-defined case of *mania egotisticalis*. She had gone through the earlier stages of fancying that wherever she appeared she was the one object of interest, and was now displaying the more dangerous symptoms of the malady where she became nervous and uncomfortable if she were not the sole topic of conversation.

Just about this time, her guardian angel, who had become seriously alarmed about her, met Opportunity in a skyeey lane.

"Look here, old man," said Mary's angel, "you have done no end of mischief with your accursed gift. Can't you take it back?"

"Impossible," returned Opportunity. "I am a 'perfect gentleman'—a gentleman through and through, I may say; and I would never ask a lady to restore a present I had once made her. But," he added, thoughtfully, "I see what a box you're in, and perhaps I can offer a little valuable assistance. It is, I regret to say, a case for the knife. Lead her, then, to her sewing-class this morning!"

Guided by her angel, Mary Isabel soon found herself in a select circle of her intimate friends, who were busily engaged in making impossible garments for the poor. Mary, who was a trifle weary, sought a secluded nook, and none knew of her presence.

The conversation about her resembled a successful spiritualistic séance, the "knocks" were so continuous and distinct, and all directed at Mary.

"Mary Isabel," said her most intimate friend, "is one of the dearest girls in the world, and I love her with all my heart; but that does not blind me to the fact that she is making an egregious fool of herself."

"Is it true," asked one woman, casually, "that she is a kleptomaniac?"

"Men undoubtedly are very nice to her," remarked number three; "but, as I heard one of them say a few days ago, she is not a woman one could either respect or admire."

"As for men being nice to her," sniffed a fourth, "how can they help it? She literally corners them."

"Does she really drink quite as much as people say?" queried number five.

"This is a terrible operation!" cried Mary's angel, the tears rolling down his cheeks as he clasped Opportunity's hand. "Haven't we had enough surgery?"

"Just a moment more," said Opportunity, encouragingly. "The wounds must be aseptized with vitriol, and a few words from her dearest friend will accomplish that."

"The silver lining to this cloud," mused Mary Isabel's angel, "is that, when we are in the hands of our friends, we need fear nothing from our enemies."

MRS. WILSON WOODROW.